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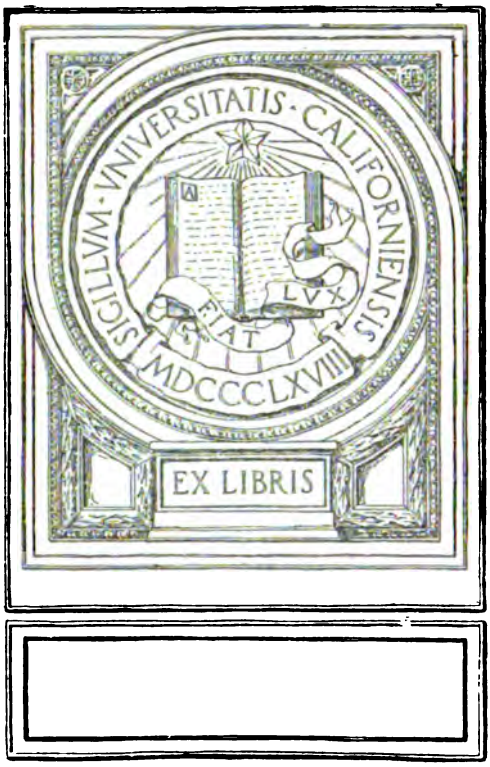
MANON PHLIPON ROLAND

EVANGELINE
WILBOUR
BLASHFIELD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MANON PHLIPON ROLAND

(EARLY YEARS)

"En nous faisant naître à l'époque de la liberté naissante, le sort nous a placés comme les enfants perdus de l'armée qui doit combattre pour elle, et la faire triompher; c'est à nous de bien faire notre tâche et préparer ainsi le bonheur des générations suivantes."

—MADAME ROLAND.

"Non, la patrie n'est pas un mot; c'est un être auquel on a fait des sacrifices, à qui l'on s'attache chaque jour par les sollicitudes qu'il cause, qu'on a créé par de grands efforts, qui s'élève au milieu des inquiétudes et qu'on aime autant par ce qu'il coûte que par ce qu'on en espère."

—MADAME ROLAND.

MANON PHLIPON ROLAND

EARLY YEARS

BY

EVANGELINE WILBOUR BLASHFIELD

AUTHOR OF "PORTRAITS AND BACKGROUNDS," "MASQUES OF CUPID," "ITALIAN CITIES" (WITH MR. BLASHFIELD), ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS AND VIEWS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1922

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INTRODUCTORY

If Mrs. Blashfield had lived she would have completed her study of Madame Roland by the addition of another volume. She left a large quantity of notes but they are mainly memoranda and useless without her own interpretation and elaboration. Among them are the records of hundreds of facts with their dates, suggestions, juxtapositions, paradoxes, confrontations, rough sketches of programme, followed by more elaborated sketches. But even these last are still rough-hewn stones which need the thought with which she cemented her materials as she built her spaciously planned edifice. With a few exceptions, therefore, reproduced as Appendixes, it has been necessary to leave her text unsupplemented and as she left it. She had however carefully revised what she finished, and the fragment which technically this must be called stands as she would have had it. It also has a unity of its own, since it completes the early history of its heroine and leaves her on the threshold of her public career.

As was to be expected, moreover, the public career of one of the most eminent of the women who have had one inevitably influences the account of her youth by any one who has made her maturity the subject of prolonged and elaborate study. The result of such study was to make of Mrs. Blashfield, at first no doubt somewhat romantically attached to so romantic

a figure as the Egeria of the Gironde, a convinced partisan. She remained, however, a singularly open-minded, as well as, it may be added, an extremely well-armed one. She warmed to the defense of her heroine and states the case for her with the genuine polemic zest that not only disdains to suppress but delights to confute hostile criticism. She was quite ready to take up instances of underestimation or flippant or unjust censure of Madame Roland. It has been possible to save from her notes and cite in her own words one or two such instances, but in many, many cases in her talks with me she has referred to misinterpretations or lack of appreciation which she meant to touch upon but in relation to which she has set nothing down on paper.

That she would have more elaborately controverted the severities of M. Aulard and others is certain. Many of the pages in her copies of Aulard's books are marked for reference almost from corner to corner. But criticism of Madame Roland is mainly, of course, concerned with her conduct and mental attitude in relation to events an account of which could find its place only in that second volume which the author was destined not to write. Her discussion of such criticism being thus in the main necessarily deferred is regrettably, and would have seemed to her grievously, incomplete. On the other hand, in Appendix V there is a hint of her sympathy with Aulard's and Louvet's strictures upon the oratory of the Girondins, and more than a hint that she should devote much attention to that detail of her subject. Dauban she followed attentively through many volumes, but among

writers upon her heroine, perhaps the attitude of Vatel is most nearly her own. And her own, after all, relied chiefly on an instinctive interpretation and argued analysis of the ultimate sources of her biography, viz., the Lettres and especially the Mémoires de Madame Roland, with their various subdivisions of Mémoires Particuliers, Portraits et Anecdotes, Notices Historiques, etc., of which she used many different editions.

The congeniality of her subject perhaps sharpened the curiosity and the conscientiousness with which she studied it on all sides, and investigated all sources of information that bore upon it. To most of the material vestiges, the backgrounds of plains and hills of brick and mortar which framed Madame Roland's life, Mrs. Blashfield paid personal visits. We went together to Amiens, Lyons, Villefranche, drove over the hills of the Beaujolais to the Clos de la Platière, and in the forest of Montmorenci visited Sainte Radegonde where Madame Roland's manuscript for a time lay hidden. We followed her Girondist friends southwest, to that strange town, fascinating at once through its history and its picturesqueness, Saint Emilion, with its rock-cut church and houses, its mediæval ramparts, its climbing, crooked streets. We looked down the famous dry well, went through the house where in the attics the men who had roused Paris and the provinces lay cramped and suffocated or frozen, fugitive victims of the license which was stifling the lately found liberty.

In Paris itself the quarters in which the comings and goings of both Manon Phlipon and Madame Ro-

land de la Platière were most frequent have changed greatly, have been opened up and are dotted with breathing spaces. Yet much remains of the revolutionary Paris and upon the very edge of the left bank of the Seine, the greatest breathing space of all, still stands the house that sheltered Manon's girlhood—a really handsome object full of style and character, built of the cream-colored stone which aids in making Paris so beautiful and which lends itself so delightfully to the caress of time. Many years ago when we went to Vasse, on the Quai Malaquais, for a photograph of it he admitted that in his great collection not one reproduction of the house existed save in general views.

His photographer went with us and made several negatives from different angles, one of which is used in this volume. Since then photographic reproductions have been published more than once, but at that time there were few, if any. In Lyons, negatives of the pastel portraits of the father and mother of Madame Roland were also made expressly for Mrs. Blashfield, and appear in this book.

An effort has been made throughout the volume to select as illustrations such portraits as the author would have chosen from the large number of prints existing at the Musée Carnavalet, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and elsewhere. The "Heinsius portrait" (so-called) in the Museum of Versailles, has been left out of the list partly because it has been so frequently published, partly because of Mrs. Blashfield's dislike of its commonness. Descendants of Madame Roland have protested against its attribution and Monsieur Pierre de

Nolhac smilingly promised Mrs. Blashfield that in the forthcoming catalogue of the gallery, a question-mark should follow the title of the portrait. The famous "Buzot medallion" and the chalk drawing from the Château de la Rosière (from which David d'Angers's profile in relief was evidently made) have been included on account of their importance and almost undoubted authenticity.

A special negative was made for the author from the rather recently acquired "Danloux portrait," in the Bibliothèque Nationale. As for the reproduction of the "physionotrace profile" its ugliness and hardness make it difficult to say whether Mrs. Blashfield would have admitted it to her book. In Paris, in the summer of 1921, the Musée Carnavalet had only a short time before received a copy of this rare print, which M. Boucher, the curator, kindly allowed me to photograph. The process of the physionotrace was popular in the years which immediately preceded and followed the birth of the nineteenth century, but it has been so forgotten that one of the leading photographers of Paris questioned me with interest as to the little I had learned concerning it. The result obtainable from it, as in the case of a silhouette made from an *ombre portée* is only nominally correct and would depend in part on the skill, light-handedness, and art-knowledge of the executant. It becomes easy unduly to emphasize the outlines, and in the case of the print at the Carnavalet the color which has been added to it tends to make the photograph harder and coarser.

Madame Roland's fame easily accounts for the number of prints or reliefs referring to her; nearly all are

in profile and have among them pretty pieces of engraving (those of Dien, Gaucher, etc.). Some of these were perhaps drawn from nature, most of them were evidently made one from another with occasional variations as to hair or head-dress. Several busts have been attributed as portraits but no mention exists of any of them in Madame Roland's writings. We went to Nevers to see the bust, brought to notice there by M. Louis Gonse. In the poor light of the overfull museum it was difficult to see it well; it seems too sharp-featured and hard to be convincing, and one notes that the attribution has been removed from the later printed reproductions of it. In the interesting bust by Morin published on page 407 of La Révolution Française, from the series of historical albums by M. Armand Dayot, Inspecteur Général des Beaux Arts, the piquant upturned corner of the mouth, so typical of most of the portraits, is missing and the nose appears sharp, rather than broad at the end as Madame Roland describes it. The smiling mouth reappears in the handsome Pajou bust at Bagatelle lent from the collection of M. Lucien Kraemer, yet it is not wholly easy to accept it as a portrait. The terminal bust portrait in the Aynard collection at Lyons by Chinard is charming. Chinard was a friend of the Rolands, and deeply indebted to madame for her intervention in relation to his imprisonment for political reasons by the Pope, but the lovely head seems to be almost that of a little girl.

The pretty curly-haired child sold on postal cards at the Carnavalet seems to me in its style too late to be convincing, but M. Boucher told me that certain

experts saw reasons for accepting it. The "Madame Roland seated on a sofa and with a little dog," shown in a retrospective exposition at Paris some years ago and chronicled in *Les Arts*, I have not seen and it was not forthcoming as a reproduction after diligent search. As for the drawing in the Bibliothèque made by an unskilful hand and inscribed as "J. M. P. Roland, dessiné à la conciergerie," it shows an exaggeration of the typical upturned mouth-corner and rather protuberant eyes with arched brows, but does not bear out the words of her fellow prisoners, Beugnot and others, as to her wearing the hair always loosely floating upon her shoulders. On the whole, though the acknowledged magic of her voice and constant play of expression are absent, we can from the written descriptions and the prints make up for ourselves a fair composite suggestion of the features of the most famous woman and one of the most famous figures of a tremendous drama.

EDWIN HOWLAND BLASHFIELD.

January 1, 1922.

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THE PORTRAIT OF MADAME ROLAND
Supposed to be "Le Camée de Langlois"

CHAPTER I

THE PORTRAIT OF THE MEMOIRS

To write anew of one who has been so celebrated not only by her contemporaries but by many successors seems perhaps superfluous. She who has received the civic crown from Quinet, Michelet, Louis Blanc, and Carlyle, whose house bears a commemorative tablet, whose statue stands on the façade of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, may be considered so securely established in her niche in history that further panegyric comment is redundant.

Time, however, has its revolutions and Fame its revenges. Following in the footsteps of the great harvesters an aftermath may be gleaned. More than a century ago Louvet established the Aegis of Posterity of the Citoyenne Roland. Fifty years have passed since Dauban and Faugère told the story that had been so piously preserved by Madame Roland's family and friends. These forty years have been extremely prolific in the discovery of documents relating to the French Revolution. There have been changes in political opinion; families have died and consequently certain susceptibilities are no longer to be considered; private papers by gift or sale become public property and domestic records attained the dignity of historical documents. Journals, letters, and household chronicles, state archives, spies' reports and diplomatic

CHAPTER I

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To write anew of one who has been so celebrated not only by her contemporaries but by their successors seems perhaps superfluous. She who has received the civic crown from Quinet, Michelet, Louis Blanc, and Carlyle, whose house bears a commemorative tablet, whose statue stands on the façade of the town hall of Paris, may be considered so securely established in her niche in history that further criticism or comment is redundant.

Time, however, has its revelations as well as its revenges. Following in the footsteps of the great harvesters an aftermath may be gleaned. More than a century ago Louvet published the Appeal to Impartial Posterity of the Citoyenne Roland. Forty years have passed since Dauban and Faugère told the secret which had been so piously preserved by Madame Roland's family and friends. These forty years have been extremely prolific in the discovery of historical data relating to the French Revolution. There have been changes in political opinion; families have died out, and consequently certain susceptibilities are no longer to be considered; private papers by gift or sale have become public property; and domestic records have attained the dignity of historical documents. Journals, letters, and household chronicles, as well as secret archives, spies' reports, and diplomats' despatches are

now open to the curious. To-day no epoch can be studied more closely than that which Matthew Arnold discriminatingly termed the most animating in history.

It was indeed not only the most animating but a unique moment in the evolution of mankind, in which nothing happened as it had ever happened before. Only the unexpected occurred, the amazing became the normal, and the impossible was the order of the day. A year counted as a lustrum, so crowded was it with events. Speculation was instantly translated into action. Theory was precipitated into practice. The written word quickened into the spoken word, and the spoken word into the immediate deed. Life moved at a quickstep. An episode grew into a drama, and a drama into a tragedy; protagonist and chorus shifted rôles with bewildering celerity; at a moment's notice the "super" of a first became the star of a second act. The butcher of yesterday played the victim of to-day. Princesses scrubbed floors, adventuresses trafficked in heads and fortunes, and great ladies trudged as camp-followers behind officers in wadded petticoats. Infantry captured fleets, and victory marched in the ranks of famished tatterdemalions.

On the swift current of events we are swept from surprise to mystery, from mystery to enigma, drawn on by the lure of the unforeseen. Despite Taine's analyses of the Revolution's origins, notwithstanding Sorel's lucid and philosophical explanations of its immediate and remote causes, of its inevitability, in fine, and Jaurès's insistence on its economic aspects, the great movement, eluding classification and arrange-

ment, retains the fascination of the impenetrable. And the Revolution is not ended. It is not a past issue. We have not solved all its problems or answered its questions. The rights of man are still to define, the social contract is yet to be made. The sphinx of the Revolution crouches in our path.

To-day its economic history is emerging through the publication of documents from municipal registers and provincial archives.* A new continent of special knowledge is open to the explorer, of measureless value to the historian of democracy. The Revolution's hoard of precious material for *savant* and student is inexhaustible. As the soil of Egypt after centuries of excavation still yields riches to the treasure-seeker, each season welcomes the publication of some work based on documents from recently discovered stores.

Modern research, though it has not radically changed our estimates of the prominent figures of the Revolution, or invalidated the judgment of its famous historians, has often modified them. Naturally enough the importance of recent discoveries has been magnified owing to the present tendency to reverse the decrees of the past, to smirch quondam saints, and to bleach *ci-devant* sinners. But, though the minute investigation of modern scholarship has resulted in no special transformation of opinion, it has profoundly altered the *general* attitude of mind towards all historical work, and has supplied a new modus and a new standard to the historian. A habit of cautious verification, unhesitating rejection of statements unsupported by

**Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire économique de la révolution française.*

documentary evidence, a disposition to lean more confidingly on a single fact than on a general belief, a growing distrust of the dramatic presentation of events, are gradually changing what was once literature into science.

Gradually only, however. The method is young. The destructive instinct of extreme youth is not entirely outgrown. The denials are less temperately phrased than the assertions. The significance of a small recent discovery is rated above that of the more important but familiar fact. The present levelling tendency is not sufficiently curbed. Style and eloquence are regarded with suspicion, as though they were necessarily misleading. But these are the defects of qualities which further development will correct.

The scientific method has not yet discrowned the queen of the Gironde. The most distinguished living historian of the Revolution, M. Aulard, still considers her the Egeria of her political party, or rather a golden-voiced siren defied and punished by sage Ulysses-Danton, who lured the wise and eloquent, as well as the young and enthusiastic, to shipwreck on the rocks of an impossible Utopia.

To Morse Stephens Madame Roland is the ambitious leader of a salon of the Opposition. To Mr. Belloc "Roland's wife is the one character which could have prevented Danton's ascendancy, and have met his ugly strength by a force as determined and more refined." Mr. Austin Dobson, who occasionally takes swallow-like dips into the waters of history, considers Madame Roland as "man by the head and

woman by the heart," though he prefers Madame de Lamballe, as is natural to a poet who confesses himself "not at ease with tragic and majestic figures," and in their presence longs "for the over-sexed woman of Rivarol." M. Perroud, the latest editor of the Roland memoirs and letters, refrains entirely from personal judgments and contents himself with exhaustive annotation and careful emendation of his author's text. His researches have furnished the most valuable additions to our knowledge of Madame Roland since Dauban's work appeared in 1867. No writer unites more genuine enthusiasm for his subject with a more detached attitude towards it, and modern objectivity finds no worthier expositor. Yet the imposing figure of the Girondin lady remains heroic in his documented pages.

The popular M. Lenôtre, who illustrates, pushed to its remotest limit, another modern tendency—devout contemplation of detail—has applied his microscope to Madame Roland, or rather to her furniture and her old clothes. To a list of the chairs and curtains in her apartment of the Rue de la Harpe, and of the worn garments left in the wardrobe when she was carried off to prison, he appends an appreciation of the owner's character and aims. This sketch, though scarcely more valuable than the discarded gowns it minutely describes, and curiously hostile in tone, does not deny to its subject the power and charm that impressed every one of her contemporaries who came within the magic circle of her influence. Courage, eloquence, elevated enthusiasm are accorded to her even by those who, through class prejudice or a kind

of belated snobbishness, are inclined to judge harshly "the ambitious *bourgeoise*," the commoner who aspired to play the aristocrat.

Indeed, it almost seems as if the attraction that swayed the minds of men in her own day had endured, and that every writer who came near this puissant personality submitted to the spell of her grace, or the force of her spirit. Royalist, Montagnard, Terrorist, Reactionary, as divided in opinion among themselves as they are from the Girondin leaders, subscribe grudgingly or cordially to the dictum of Antonelle, her political opponent: "*O Roland, la plus séduisante des femmes, le plus grand des hommes.*"

The "*grand homme*" is raised on a pedestal to be observed and judged by every one; the *séduisante femme* is less known. All the world has seen the palms laid at the feet of the heroine, few have noted the tender tributes of friends and comrades to the charming woman. It is to the more intimate knowledge of her character rather than of her acts or her influence that the research of the last few years has contributed. M. Join-Lambert's publication of the correspondence of M. and Mme. Roland before their marriage, M. Perroud's discovery of the souvenirs of Madame Sophie Grandchamp, and his monumental editions of Madame Roland's letters are the most important of several publications that form a valuable commentary on her own Memoirs.

As yet, however, in spite of new matter, Madame Roland remains her own best biographer, and any study of her life and work, or of the national drama she helped to make will always return again and again

to her Memoirs. Fresh material may supplement, it cannot supersede them. She speaks better for herself than any one can speak for her. She tried to plead her own cause before the Revolutionary Tribunal. She longed to justify her husband, to exonerate her friends. She was silenced, as were Vergniaud and all the golden tongues of her eloquent party, but, never losing faith in human justice, she spent the last months of her life in writing an appeal to a more august tribunal—"the judgment," in her own words, "of Impartial Posterity."

Memoirs were never composed under greater stress. They were written by stealth, in solitary confinement, under the eyes of a watchful guard, in a tiny, stifling cell, with the shadow of the guillotine falling across their pages. They cover quartos of coarse gray paper supplied by the jailer for the prisoners' correspondence. The sheets are closely written, for space was valuable as well as time, in an elegant, clear hand with hardly an erasure or a correction, though some of the lines are blotted with tear-stains. A biography of this manuscript would read like a romance of adventure. It was smuggled out of prison under a woman's neckerchief, dropped furtively into the court from a barred window, and picked up by a devoted friend literally at the risk of his head. It was hidden for months in a deserted quarry, in the cleft of a rock in the forest of Montmorency, and in the hermitage of Sainte Radegonde. They carried death in their folds like the subtly poisoned billets of the Renaissance, those boldly written pages. Some of them were burned in a panic of fear after the arrest of the friend to whom they were con-

fided, and some of them were concealed within a few feet of the formidable Committee of Public Safety. When the scattered leaves were finally collected and published it was the house friends of Madame Roland, Bosc and Louvet, who gave them to the world.

We owe the Memoirs of Madame Roland to her friends—it was their courage and devotion that preserved and transmitted her Appeal; Champagneux, Bosc, Mentelle, Helena Williams, Sophie Grandchamp each took up the perilous task as suspicion or arrest fell upon one after another of the little group. The contemporaries of Madame Roland raised temples to friendship; the preservation of her papers is not one of the least of these monuments.

The eighteenth century—analytical, self-conscious, curious of the things of the mind, deeply interested in defining the rights and the relations of the individual to the general scheme of existence—sought expression in memoirs. No age is as rich in the personal record of events and emotions. As art had turned to genre and portraiture, deserting Paradise and Olympus, literature, responding even more sensitively to the demands of new-born realism, was occupied with actualities. The seventeenth century had busied itself with the study of divinity and the soul of man, the eighteenth century sought light in the study of humanity and the mind of man. Buffon succeeded to Fénelon, Rousseau's Confessions to the Pensées of Pascal; as spiritual guide the Enchiridion of Epictetus replaced the Philothée of Saint Francis de Sales, and while the Lives of Plutarch were diligently read, the dust gathered on the Lives of the Saints.

If the study of man in general was interesting, the contemplation of the individual man was engrossing. That intimate *homo* that each one of us knows, or fancies he knows, best, became the object of earnest contemplation and brilliant exposition, given the habit of writing and the perfected instrument of expression that the French language had become in the eighteenth century. To inventory one's own person, to take stock of one's capacities, to plumb the depths of the heart, to sound the shallows of the mind, to balance faults and weaknesses against virtues and excellences, to cast this self-knowledge in a pretty mould of exact terms and deftly turned, epigrammatic phrases, was an intellectual game constantly played in a society that, to the natural absence of reserve of the Latin, united a social instinct so highly developed that reticence was as irksome to it as solitude. Thus the Portrait, a delicately worded, penetratingly observed study in analysis, was a favorite diversion and a literary exercise in polite circles, and memoirs are but a further development of the full-length portrait with the addition of background and minor figures.

Memoirs are valuable as revelations of character, as pictures of society, as contemporary records of events, and as expressions of the general spirit of their epoch. Æsthetic interest is superadded when they are written with style and grace. They gain in importance as the character of the author is remarkable, as the society depicted is unusual, as the events described are noteworthy. If a fine sense of form governs the arrangement of material they become *belles lettres* as well as documents. Weighed by any of these standards of

value the Memoirs of Madame Roland are of capital importance, as precious to the psychologist as to the historian of manners, or events, or letters. No document affords a more intimate view of the Revolution, a more animated picture of the life of the *bourgeoisie*, or a more searching study of a unique personality—a personality of whom a contemporary, Lemontey, wrote: "*ce n'était pas seulement le caractère le plus fort, mais encore le plus vrai de notre révolution.*"

The carefully finished portrait of the author is only one of a series that covers the ample canvas of the Memoirs—portraits that are occasionally painted in lurid or dark colors, but how keen is the perception, how trenchant the characterization! The men who made and unmade the Revolution have sat unconsciously for the clear-eyed artist. Dumouriez, Vergniaud, Condorcet, Danton, Marat, Robespierre, are sketched from life. To turn the leaves of the Portraits et Anecdotes is like passing from room to room, from case to case, of the Musée Carnavalet, though no piously guarded relics, no vestiges of the past carefully arranged under glass, can compare as a means of evoking it with the narrative of an eye-witness. The force, the fire, the irresistible movement of the Revolution lives again in Madame Roland's pages.

Memoirs written during the Terror are rare, those of Meillan, Brissot, Barbaroux, Buzot, Pétion, Louvet, and Dumouriez make but a short list, and lack the color and impetus, as well as the literary flavor, of those of Madame Roland. Many of the so-called Revolutionary memoirs were composed after Thermidor and during the Empire. Lapses of memory, changes of

political opinion, the unpopularity of republican ideas, and the natural conservatism of age biassed the views and affected the veracity of their authors, so that their souvenirs are less trustworthy as well as less attractive than those hastily penned in the face of events.

There is a peculiar charm in history that has been lived by the historian, and there is an intimate attraction in following the evolution of the historian's mind and character under the influence of the events recorded. When Madame Roland was first imprisoned hope was strong in her; her friends were free, raising the Provinces, gathering an army that she hoped to see enter Paris, re-establishing the rule of law and the rights of all Frenchmen against the despotism of a minority. Through June and July, sustained by letters from Buzot and by visits from her friends, she spent many hours in writing an apologia for her husband's policy as minister of the interior and an explanation of her share in his work. In August the news of the defeat of Wimpfen's army and the flight of the Girondin leaders bereft her of all hope. Her friends were "*suspects.*" Champagneux was arrested, and the greater part of the work she had confided to him was burned in a panic of terror. Bosc had resigned his position and could see her only rarely. Grandpré, watched and hounded, counted his visits. Her solitude was almost unbroken. She was alone with her disillusions and her sorrows, her lost dreams of a free and happy republican France, her dead faith in the noble aspirations and innate goodness of the people. Anguish far more intolerable even than the loss of belief in lofty ideals pressed on her heart—the thought of

her lover, a fugitive and an outlaw in hourly peril of his life.

Madame Roland since her convent days had found her spiritual guide under the Porch, but stoicism, though it fortifies the mind, cannot steel the heart, and the lonely woman, wounded in all her affections, sought asylum from despair, not in the Gospels nor in the Discourses, but in the evocation of her own youth. She stopped her ears against the clamor of her unhappy time, and listened to the voice of memory. As she listened the blood-stained walls of her fetid prison vanished and she was in the dewy forest of Meudon gathering the first violets of the year, or walking in the Jardin du Roi between the glowing flowerbeds in a gay holiday throng, or in her own tiny room overlooking the Seine, among her books—young again, free from the chains of duty and the tyranny of circumstance.

In the Mémoires Particuliers present ills are ignored and public life almost forgotten, save only when the firmly woven thread of the narrative is broken by a wail of grief, or a cry of indignation at some new crime against liberty and justice. Once the paper is abruptly cut off, "for no one is sure of living twenty-four hours."

Were it not for these crosses that mark the flowery path of the narrative of sunny early years it would be difficult to realize that it was the work of one about to die. The envoys of the Mountain howl "*Mort à la femme Roland*" under her windows, the hawkers of the Père Duchesne shout their obscene calumnies within her hearing: insult and peril only speed her pen,

and sweeten and strengthen the memory of her youth. And this record of youthful days has youth's own spontaneous and irresistible charm. Here are no echoes of antiquity, no Roman matron's attitude; for the moment Plutarch is forgotten and Jean Jacques remembered. The *citoyenne*, the austere republican, has dropped the stylus, and Manon Phlipon has taken up the facile quill of her countrywomen that in her hand becomes a wizard's rod calling up a vanished world. Gayety, tenderness, irony, frolic mirth, a frank abandonment to the young delight of being alive; an unusual capacity for realizing past moods of thought and phases of feeling, concise yet vivid bits of description, penetrating appreciations of character, a style clear and sparkling as youthful eyes that have known neither tears nor vigils; a sureness of touch and lightness of hand that, in spite of a didactic tone (common to most of the late eighteenth-century memoirs), always saves the every-day from becoming the commonplace; by such means is the narrative of the retired, uneventful life of a little Parisian *bourgeoise* endued with significance and distinction.

How true is her picture? Did she add to the delineation of the girl that she had been, the portrait of the woman she desired to be, or the woman she had become? Did not the amplitude of a matured style, the reflections of a riper experience enrich the records of her obscure youth? Undoubtedly. In persons gifted with an abundant inner life the imagination is such a formative factor, such a reality in fine, that it is impossible sharply to divide it from the other reality of fact. There is also in every highly differenti-

ated human creature an ego that observes and criticises, as well as an ego that feels and acts. This dualism of the personality inevitably affects the integrity of a retrospective narrative by unconsciously imparting to the primitive ego the larger views and saner judgments of a further stage of mental evolution. Nor can an autobiographer escape a tendency to mould his substance into a fixed form. An author generally possesses an ideal of art even when his life is void of one. Every one has his conventions even when revolting against convention. To be comprehensible we are forced to employ accepted forms; and this obligatory formality dominates the matter it fashions.

With these reservations Madame Roland's account of her life may be taken with less than the proverbial grain of salt. When she wrote—"The daughter of an artist, born in an obscure station but of respectable parents, I spent my youth in the bosom of the fine arts, nourished by the delights of study, ignorant of all superiority but that of merit, of all greatness but that of virtue"—Dauban observes that she sees her childhood as a mirage. But while the style is romantic the statements are indisputable. She *did* spend her childhood in the studio of her father, a master engraver on metal (graveur de Monsieur le comte d'Artois was his official title), an artist, as he was called in an age that defined the word, "*l'ouvrier qui travaille avec grand art et avec facilité.*" There was no chasm then between the industrial and the fine arts. The engraver who decorated snuff-boxes and watch-cases was prepared for his task by an apprenticeship in drawing from the antique and in study of the best models.

Pretty things were not made by the gross then, and each one, if not a separate invention of the maker, was the product of patient, often of enthusiastic, effort, and sometimes was a masterpiece executed under high pressure of fervor and delight. With less knowledge, perhaps there was more feeling than we possess, —"*L'ouvrier naît au XVIII^e siècle et la machine au XIX^e.*"

In her father's atelier the small Manon Phlipon drew from the antique and learned to handle the burin. She had half a dozen masters for dancing, singing, the guitar, the *clavecin*, the violin. She *did* pass her youth in study, reading voraciously and indiscriminately, but usually taking notes and analyzing her reading. If she devoured Candide to-day, to-morrow found her working out algebraic formulæ, or filling a letter to Sophie with an abstract of Leibnitz's theory of sensations.

If her girlhood was saddened by a knowledge of her father's dissipation and her mother's anxieties, if in her own home she saw how helpless is goodness to command happiness, such experience does not disprove her words—indeed, the assertion that she was "ignorant of all superiority but that of merit" is a frank admission of the humbleness of her position. Even the least and poorest of nobles was hampered by a thousand different superiorities and greatnesses in the social hierarchy from which the *petite bourgeoisie* was happily free.

CHAPTER II

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

One curious characteristic of these Memoirs, written literally in a race with death, is their air of leisure. The writer begins her story with her own birth and with the portraits of her parents. M. and Mme. Phlipon were painted also by La Tour, and it is interesting to note how these pastels, now in the museum at Lyons, illustrate the pen sketches by their daughter. Gatien Phlipon, in his best coat and lace cravat, in spite of his fine eyes and artist's mouth, is a little vulgar-looking—less so, however, than the portraits of the dukes of Choiseul and Lauzun.

M. Phlipon was "strong and healthy, active and vain." "Without learning he had that degree of taste and knowledge, which the fine arts give superficially, in whatever branch they are practised." "He could not be said to be a virtuous man, but he had a great deal of what is called honor. He would have no objection to receiving more than it was worth for a thing, but he would have killed himself rather than not pay the price of what he had purchased." Thus Madame Roland with much detachment, and La Tour seems to confirm her judgment.

M. Phlipon's position was financially and socially an agreeable one. Though he kept a shop where he sold his own and his pupils' work, and occasionally dealt in jewels on commission, he was enough of an

artist in sentiment and knowledge to consort with more gifted confrères. His family and that of his wife, though plebeian, were in no sense *peuple*. His forebears had always owned their own shops and been their own masters. His father, Gatien Phlipon, was a wine-merchant. His mother, Marie Geneviève Rotisset, who had relations among *la grande bourgeoisie*, opposed her sister's marriage to the well-to-do *intendant* of a *fermier général* as a derogation from the family dignity. M. Phlipon himself married a dowerless girl, Marie Marguerite Bimont, the daughter of a mercer, who became the mother of Madame Roland on March 18, 1754.

Madame Roland's ancestry was made the subject of a careful study based on public documents, by M. Jal in the Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d'histoire, article "Roland." It is therefore surprising that M. Lenôtre in his Salon de Madame Roland (Paris Révolutionnaire, p. 172, ed. 1906) should have commenced his sketch by the utterly unfounded statements that Madame Roland's grandfather Rotisset was the head cook of the Marquis de Créquy, that he married the chambermaid of the marquise, and that their daughter, Fanchon Rotisset, became the wife of Gatien Phlipon and the mother of his illustrious daughter.

M. Lenôtre does not give his authority for these misstatements. It is not far to seek, however. The Créquys' apocryphal cook and chambermaid are only two of the fictitious characters invented by the pamphleteer Causen de Courchamps in his spurious Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy (VII, p. 192, ed. of 1840). It was Causen's fabrications of this kind that

betrayed the counterfeit character of these cleverly forged memoirs. Though they have recently been abbreviated, translated into English, and presented to the American public as a genuine eighteenth-century production, they were discredited shortly after their appearance in 1840.

M. Lenôtre's repetition of Causen's fiction is the more incomprehensible because M. Lenôtre acknowledges his indebtedness to M. Perroud for all the material of his Mort de Roland. Now M. Perroud published (in his Lettres de Madame Roland, 1902) an abstract of M. Jal's genealogical study of the Rolands, and a correction of M. Lenôtre's careless repetition of Causen's invention. A mere glance at these notes would have prevented M. Lenôtre from prematurely despising Madame Roland as the upstart offspring of a couple of servants, and viewing her career with consequent severity. A sufficient acquaintance with the documents in the case to prove that Manon's grandparents were well-to-do bourgeois connected with *la haute finance* would not only have mitigated the asperity of M. Lenôtre's judgment, but would have imposed fewer reserves on our future enjoyment of his entertaining glimpses of history.

Madame Phlipon's portrait forms a sharp contrast to that of her rather positive, blunt-featured husband; in her face there is no lack of delicate edge, of a certain pensiveness refining its evident amiability; she also is in gala dress, and wears her furs and laces with fine unconsciousness. She is a thoughtful and dignified person quite worthy of a place among La Tour's fine ladies. Of the deep love and veneration she inspired

GATIEN PHLIPON—FATHER OF MADAME ROLAND

Pastel by Latour in the Museum of Lyons

in her discriminating daughter the Memoirs bear constant witness. It was to this mother of "the heavenly mind and the charming face" that Madame Roland not only owed the sense of duty which proved a sanctuary to her ardent temperament, but a youth exempt from those household cares that devour time and strength. A large leisure for study, a serene and cheerful home life, which soothed the nerves and modified an excess of sensibility, were the gifts of this wise parent to a highly strung, precocious child. And the child of the *bourgeoise* was fortunate when her mother was judicious as well as tender, for mother and daughter were literally inseparable in the families of the Third Estate, and though the little Manon Phlipon, born before Rousseau's gospel had literally laid the baby on its mother's breast, was put out to nurse in the country, she passed her girlhood, with the exception of a year in a convent, under the maternal wing. The care of her daughter was the occupation and the diversion of the austerely bred *bourgeoise;* to this one little subject of her kingdom Madame Phlipon relaxed the discipline that often narrowed and alienated filial tenderness by imposing on it a specific character that distinguished it from the other free and natural affections, but this amiable mamma's frown or the substitution of "Mademoiselle" for "*ma fille,*" was more effective than M. Phlipon's birch rod. Discipline of a more spiritual sort Maman Phlipon was not chary of, and her daughter's education was a practical preparation for the duties of life as well as its opportunities. The training of heart and mind began when the little Manon was sent home to Paris (1756)

from her nurse's farm near Arpajon, where she had spent the first two years of her life. She was a rosy peasant baby, with the manners of a rustic but docile and affectionate; extremely obstinate when neither her reason nor her feelings were appealed to, and already inclined to resist what appeared to her the dictates of caprice or the arbitrary exercise of authority. The child's education was a compromise between that of a *grande bourgeoise*, like Madame de Pompadour, and that of a housewife of the Third Estate, for the *petite bourgeoise* was a kind of social mermaid; of the people through her position, of the aristocracy through her accomplishments. Household tasks were familiar to her, she was expert in needlework, she went to market and learned to cook daintily and economically, as only the French middle class practise this most subtle of the domestic arts. She combined the practical training of Molière's charming Henriette of the Femmes Savantes with the studies of her learned sister Armande.

The artistic tastes and acquirements of Monsieur Phlipon influenced his daughter's studies also, and the teaching of Grandmamma Phlipon, a poor relation of great folk, who had spent much of her life in their households and had acquired the tone of *la parfaitement bonne compagnie*, were factors in Manon's breeding that curiously united simplicity of habits with complexity of interests. And these interests were complex indeed. Encyclopædic information was acquired by some ambitious girls and sought by many, inspired by the master spirit of this century of inquiry, Voltaire, who handled all the things of the mind with

so light yet so sure a touch. To know something of everything was the ideal of studious youth, and several individuals came perilously near to attaining it, notably the fifteen-year-old Laurette de Malboissière, who mentions casually in one of her letters: "To-day, after reading Locke and Spinoza, and doing my Spanish theme and my Italian exercise, I took my lessons in mathematics and dancing. At five o'clock my little drawing-master came, who remained with me an hour and a quarter. After he left I read twelve chapters of Epictetus in Greek and the last part of Timon of Athens." The accomplished Laurette died at nineteen, probably after having exhausted the sum of human knowledge or her capacity for acquiring it. Madame de Genlis, who was of tougher fibre, is another typical product of the higher culture. She preached, taught, wrote novels, played the harp, bled and blistered, acted, danced, sang, composed, and learned half a dozen trades.

The Phlipon family were on a lower social plane than the ladies just quoted, but the ideals of the *petite bourgeoisie* fluctuated between those of the people and the nobility, and the education of its daughters was a compromise that included many sage incongruities. "This little girl," Madame Roland writes of herself, "who read serious books, could explain the courses of the celestial spheres, handle the crayon and the graver, and at the age of eight was the best dancer of a number of young people older than herself assembled at a family merrymaking, was often called to the kitchen to make an omelet, pick vegetables, or skim the pot. In no occupation am I at a

loss. I can prepare my own dinner as handily as Philopœmen cut his wood."

The studies of the little Phlipon began at what we should now consider a very early age; at four she knew how to read, and, as she was naturally studious, all that was necessary to continue her education was to provide her with books; they were her toys, and nothing but the sight of a flower could divert her attention from them. "Under the tranquil shelter of the paternal roof, I was happy from my infancy with books and flowers; in the narrow confines of a prison, in the bonds imposed by a most revolting tyranny, I have the same feeling, and I forget the injustice of men, their follies, and my misfortunes, with flowers and books."

It was not to books alone that Manon's time was given; besides, lessons in writing, geography, and history, dancing and music, formed an important part of her curriculum; she had masters for the guitar, the violin, and for singing; she drew from her father's collection of casts and began to engrave under his supervision. Miscellaneous reading ran an even course with study. The small house library was soon exhausted, a folio Bible, the Lives of the Saints, the Civil Wars of Appian, The Comic Romance of Scarron, and a couple of volumes of memoirs, those of the romantic De Pontis and of the gallant *frondeuse* Mademoiselle de Montpensier, were read and reread again and again. So insatiable was Manon's intellectual curiosity that, having unearthed an old tome on the art of heraldry, she studied it to such purpose that she surprised her father by a criticism on a seal composed against the rules of that art, and soon be-

came his oracle in such matters—a responsible position when letters were habitually closed with the blazon of the writer and such seals formed part of an engraver's work.

A happy discovery soon furnished Manon with more nourishing fare for a growing intelligence. In rummaging her father's studio she found a store of books belonging to one of his pupils, from which she furtively carried off a volume now and then to devour in her own den. One day she saw a work she had just finished in her mother's hands and, feeling assured that the discreet lady shared her discovery, Manon assumed the air of merely following the parental example and continued to borrow without scruple. The art student possessed sound literary taste—travels, plays, Voltaire's Candide, a French translation of Tasso, Télémaque, and Dacier's Plutarch formed his small collection. Manon's susceptible little heart and ardent imagination were touched and fired by the heroes of Fénelon and the Gerusalemme. It seems curious to-day that the course of young blood should have been quickened by the didactic Télémaque, or the operatic paladins of Tasso, yet Madame Roland was so moved by them that she would have plucked out her tongue "rather than have read aloud the episodes of the island of Calypso and a number of passages in Tasso; my breath grew short, a sudden blush covered my face, and my altered voice would have betrayed my agitation. With Telemachus I was Eucharis, and Herminia with Tancred. . . . I was these very characters, and I saw only the objects that existed for them."

The keen-edged mockery and positive good sense of

Voltaire were excellent correctives for such excess of sensibility. Plutarch, however, proved the true *patria* for a proud yet impassioned spirit; henceforth it dwelt in his divine company of heroes and sages. The large and virile accents of the brave and wise of the antique world vibrating across the ages, made noble music in an ardent young heart. "Plutarch caused the French Revolution," Brunetière somewhat arbitrarily asserted; it would have been truer perhaps to say that the antique biographer made many revolutionists. Madame Roland became the soul-child of the sage and tender old Greek. "Plutarch seemed to be exactly the nourishment that suited my mind. I shall never forget the Lent of 1763, at which time I was nine years old, when I carried it to church instead of my prayer-book. From that time I date the impressions and ideas that made me a republican, though then I did not dream that I should ever become one." Many years afterwards, when she was first imprisoned, among the few books that she sent for was the Lives, "the Bible of the strong," as Michelet called them. No work exercised so deep and permanent an influence on Madame Roland's conduct and her mode of thought as this heroic symphony of literature. She wept that she was not born in Athens or Sparta, and long afterwards, in her studies of philosophy, though she became "Jansenist, Cartesian, Stoic," and sceptic in turn, she ended by giving the palm to the Stoics, whom she early had learned to revere. Even in yielding to the enchantments of Rousseau she still preserved the virile temper which had been nourished and fortified by the love of Plutarch.

Among the authors who direct us, who guide us, who move us, who transport us to the starry realm of the imagination, there are those who above all others speak to our souls, who seem our very selves made wise and strong and eloquent, who address our spirit in a tongue that sounds strangely familiar, who express the thoughts that in some groping, stumbling way we ourselves have conceived dimly, who endow with form, substance, and radiant reality ideas that were to us but vague and amorphous notions, mere shimmers and gleams of apprehension. There are in our literary pantheon some altars more richly crowned than others, some writers to whom we yield a more complete inner acquiescence, whom we elect for leaders, masters and lords of our spirit.

In spite of her admiration for Plutarch's heroic pagans, however, Manon was a most devout Christian and a student of the Word; it is true that learning the Athanasian creed was rewarded by hearing the fairy-tale of Tangier of the Long Nose, a kind of mythic Cyrano de Bergerac, and that at first her unusual activity of mind was applied to the mysteries of her faith in a somewhat secular spirit. Madame Phlipon's younger brother was an ecclesiastic. This "dear little uncle," the Abbé Bimont, "handsome, benevolent, and gay," of whom Madame Roland tells us she "could never think without emotion," took a personal interest in his niece's religious education. Her presence at the catechism classes in the parish church, where her remarkable memory easily won her the first place, was a source of pride to the amiable abbé as well as to her parents. "Madame Phlipon was pious with-

out being a devotee; she was, or endeavored to be, a believer, and she conformed to the rules of the church with the humility and regularity of one whose heart, having need of the support of its main principles, troubles itself but little with its details." The reverence with which she approached religious subjects deeply impressed a sensitive child.

Madame Phlipon's devotion to duty was early felt and shared by her daughter. The family piety, so characteristic of the older races, demands many small sacrifices of women; among those of Manon's mother was a weekly visit to Grandmamma Bimont, a palsied and imbecile old lady. It was a severe penance for an active child to sit quiet for two hours while Madame Phlipon listened complaisantly to the gabble of Marie, the old lady's attendant. There were no books, only the Psalter, which palled after the French had been read and the Latin chanted some scores of times. The grandmamma's dotage was of a perverse and painful character. When Manon was gay the old lady wept; "if I fell down or hurt myself she would burst out laughing. . . . I could have borne with her laughing at me; but her tears were always accompanied by pitiable and idiotic outbursts that shocked me inexpressibly and filled me with terror." One day the child cried for vexation, and begged to go away; her mamma, to exercise the little one's patience, stayed the whole evening. "Nor did she fail at a more favorable time to explain that these wearisome visits were a sacred obligation, which it was an honor for me to share. I do not know how she managed it, but the lesson touched my heart," wrote Madame Roland years afterwards.

If she was a Puritan in her respect for duty, Madame

Phlipon was a Parisienne in her devotion to dress. She was a true descendant of those mediæval burgesses of Paris whose gorgeous gowns so surprised Isabeau de Bavière. "I thought I was the only queen; they are all queens here," petulantly exclaimed the royal bride. Madame Phlipon's passion was a vicarious one. Simple as one of Chardin's housewives in her own attire, all her frills and frivolity were lavished on her girl, who was her doll and her toy. From her infancy Madame Roland was dressed with a degree of elegance and even richness superior to her social station. "The fashionable gowns for young girls in those days were cut all in one piece, with a close-fitting bodice; they were made like the court dresses, very tight in the waist, which they showed to advantage, very ample below, with a long sweeping train trimmed according to the taste of the wearer or the fashion of the season. Mine were of fine silk of some simple pattern and quiet color, but in price and quality as rich as the best holiday costumes of my mother." Truly an appropriate and hygienic dress for a child! Something of this childish coquetry remained with Madame Roland through life. Though simple, almost Spartan in her tastes, she was constantly well dressed, and her beautiful and abundant hair was always becomingly arranged. Dumouriez, who feared and resisted her influence, wrote of her during the busiest period of her life that she was "*toujours mise élégamment.*"

The position of puppet for the display of fine clothes was almost as trying as that of visitor to a weak-minded grandmother. Rousseau had not yet struck the fetters from the poor little prisoner of the old régime. Children were still in the bondage of stiff stays and farthin-

gales, the gyves of trains and high heels, the restraints of frizzed and powdered coiffures. The tiny, demure gentlemen and ladies in manner and dress were their elders seen through a diminishing glass. The dainty doll who curtsies so gravely in Cazot's "Dancing Lesson," the little dunce standing primly erect in Chardin's "Bonne Education," or the miniature coquette, who is squired by an equally diminutive cavalier in Moreau's "Petits Parrains"—all these exquisite, wee creatures are Lilliputians, not denizens of Childland. Madame Roland confides to us the tortures of elaborate toilettes, of lacing and hair-dressing, always accompanied by gasps and tears, which preceded a promenade or a visit. Fortunately on ordinary days her finery was laid aside and she went to early mass with her mother, or alone to the nearest greengrocer's to buy the parsley or salad which the maid had forgotten, dressed in a simple linen frock. Her dress presented the same contrasts as did her education.

Meanwhile, under this outward diversity of tastes and habits, her inner life was a harmonious and consistent one. From her childhood (if we may trust her memory of it) the future heroine of the Republic possessed the faculty, as invaluable to a student as to a diplomatist, of living in the present, of absorption in the interest of the moment. A fervid imagination, furnished by good reading with pure and noble images, realized vividly the motives and acts of the knights and heroes who formed her mental society. Cato or Godfrey was to her as real as and more comprehensible than the haggling herb-seller round the corner or the children she met at the catechism class.

The lack of playmates of her own age fostered Manon's introspective life. From the time she learned to read, her highest delights and tenderest sorrows had been found between the covers of her books. In them she had early discovered the open sesame to a wonder world of unfading joys, a region of marvels wherein a poor little girl in her coarse-stuff gown, shivering beside a drafty window, was transformed into a princess, a paladin, a patriot, or a martyr. Manon, it will be observed, always appropriated the leading rôles—nothing short of the part of the *grande amoureuse* or that of the hero himself satisfied her aspirations.

Nor was she content to shut away all her state and splendor in some dingy volume when the magic hour was over and she was called to her needle or her lessons. Manon was the very reverse of antinomian; her preoccupation, as soon as she began to reflect, was to live her thoughts, to translate into action her loved hero's deeds and high emprises. Was there no place left for Brutus's virtue and Tancred's courage in her daily existence? Were noble lives and great examples to be admired coldly, disinterestedly, merely as one did the antique busts and statues in her father's studio? Even those material images she copied; why not the grander human examples of a glorious past? She felt within herself the flutter of newly fledged pinions, a potentiality for sacrifice, a goading desire to do as well as to dream—to be an actor, not a spectator only, in the mystery of life.

CHAPTER III

AUSTERITY AND FRIVOLITY

CONFIRMATION, a solemn ceremony to the impressionable child of a pious mother, precipitated these vague outreachings into a definite aspiration. The thought of her first communion penetrated Manon with religious awe. Even her simple, quiet existence appeared to her far too worldly to admit of proper preparation for it. The Philothée of Saint Francis de Sales, most amiable of saints, became the *livre de chevet* of the little pagan who three years before had carried her Plutarch to mass, and who now laid aside her poets and historians to study the dogmas of her faith. The words she had formerly learned so lightly grew weighty with spiritual meaning. She followed with increasing love and reverence the holy offices of her church, deeply moved by her new comprehension of the divine mysteries embodied in their gorgeous ceremonial. All the time she could save from her daily tasks was given to prayer, meditation, and books of devotion. Bible-reading as usual suggested doubts of the divine goodness. The transformation of the devil into a serpent and the apparent cruelty of the Supreme Being in permitting this metamorphosis caused her first stumble in the path of belief, but gradually the constant contemplation of the grand central motive of her religion effaced all the neophyte's doubts

and "the reign of sentiment in her heart began with the love of God."

To love, with this intense child, was to give herself unreservedly to the loved. How could she serve her Lord?—for in service only is love made visible. She practised secret austerities; fasted, surreptitiously sprinkled her beefsteak with ashes, and said long prayers kneeling on the bare floor on bitter winter nights. She again sighed for the vanished days of Greece and Rome, but for the sake of the tortures and persecutions that would have won her a martyr's crown. The lives of the saints, the heroic who were also the holy, thrilled her with admiration. Alas, pincers and racks, tigers and arenas were hopelessly out of reach! Martyrdom in France (except for a Protestant or a sceptic like the Chevalier de la Barre) was obsolete, but self-immolation in another form was to be had for the asking. In the solitude of the cloister sanctity could be sought; there one could die to the world more slowly but not less truly than under the axe or among the beasts at Ephesus.

For some time the thought of leaving her mother sent Manon's thoughts shuddering away from the idea of a convent. But what costlier sacrifice could she offer the Lord than this unique love of her heart? Practical always in the application of the ideal to daily life, her resolution swiftly grew into action, and one evening, after supper, the Phlipons were startled by seeing their daughter fall at their feet and with floods of tears implore their consent to enter a convent.

The convent, not the veil, Manon pleaded for, as the first station in the thorny path of renunciation.

She besought a pious retreat in which fittingly to prepare herself to receive the greatest of Christian privileges. Madame Phlipon, touched by her daughter's desire and the suffering it had evidently cost the child, yielded a reluctant, her father a more cordial, consent. Manon's music-master recommended a religious house where he visited some titled pupils, and after the preliminary inquiries a convent of the Sisterhood of the Congregation was chosen (May 7, 1765). This building, once in the rue Saint Etienne, Faubourg Saint Marcel, has been long since swept away by the rising tide of business needs. A few such houses still remain like tranquil islands of gray rock and green grass and venerable trees, midstream of the rush and whirl of modern Paris. The dusky, fragrant chapel, the long, bare corridors, the beamed refectory with its sculptured wall-fountain and lofty reading-desk, the deep garden, bird-haunted, with its mossy statues of virgin saints and its lichen-covered benches, formed a background as harmonious for a young devotee as that which glows dimly behind the glimmering halo of a holy maiden in some warm-hued, mediæval panel. Could piety, at once fervent and romantic, discover a more congenial retreat? The peace of the cloister and the industry of the world were united within these walls. The nuns of the Congregation taught poor children in a free day-school, and received a certain number of young girls of the *petite noblesse* and the *bourgeoisie* as boarding-scholars, for girls, when not entirely cloister-bred, generally passed a few years at least in a convent.

The discipline and comparative isolation of these

modest religious houses were more salutary than severe. They were far removed from the magnificent worldliness of the abbey of Fontévrault, where royal princesses were sent to hold miniature courts and to give laws to their instructors. They bore not the faintest resemblance to the aristocratic chapter of Chelles, where baby patricians were drilled in social observances, and etiquette and genealogy were first in the short list of studies. The more humble convent of the rue Saint Etienne was to the religious world what the *bourgeois* household represented in the social hierarchy.

Few girls are not the better for the mild rigors of a conventual rule. Especially is it valuable for intensely individual natures, impatient of restraint and recalcitrant to command. The pervasive discipline that seems less the exercise of individual authority than the impersonal sway of law, the universal subjection to duty, the prompt, silent, military obedience impartially exacted from all, impress and subdue the most insubordinate, while the low voices and gentle manners of the nuns soften the austerity of their rule. It makes for more disinterested aims in after life when for a time the young are brought into contact with those who have elected self-abnegation as an ideal, in theory at least. The monastic cultus of purity and sacrifice remains in certain natures long after the piety that first inspired them has faded away, to chasten the imagination and strengthen the will. Madame Roland is herself an example of the persistence of these benign influences. There is no sweeter picture of convent life than that of this child of Plutarch, and if

the nunneries of the eighteenth century were often centres of vanity and frivolity, where all the artificial distinctions of social life were observed as strictly before the altar as before the throne, if they were sometimes dark places of cruelty and crime, they were often nurseries of the amiable virtues. The obscure convent of Madame Roland's Memoirs is as typical as that of Diderot's Religieuse, or the lax retreat at Montfleury where Madame de Tencin began her tempestuous career.

Manon found in the ladies of the Congregation kind and well-bred if not very learned teachers. The precocious child was already familiar with most of their subjects of study, and her quickness, diligence, and pretty, sedate manners soon endeared her to the sisters. Two of them, of widely differing types, she sketched in her Memoirs. Mother Sainte Sophie had become a nun at fifty and brought with her to the cloister the high breeding and varied accomplishments of a woman of the world. Would you know what they were, these accomplishments that made their possessor the envy of the less gifted? "She wrote a fine hand, embroidered with elegance, was versed in orthography and not unacquainted with history." "Knowledge puffeth up"—no wonder the Mother Sainte Sophie was slightly pedantic and that the other sisters looked with green eyes upon her superiority. This erudite person soon became attached to the studious and demure little Phlipon, gave her private instruction and lessons in reading aloud, an acquirement much valued when, modern conditions being reversed, readers were many and books were few. Mother Sainte Sophie was too

M. J. PH. ROLAND.

Née à Paris en 1756.

Femme du Ministre de l'intérieur N. S. assassinée par le Tribunal Révolutionnaire le 19. Brumaire a de la Rép.

THE BONNEVILLE ENGRAVING OF MADAME ROLAND

imposing, too superior, to be loved by her disciple; it was another, humbler sister who won Manon's heart and kept it all her life. This was Angélique Boufflers, a dowerless girl, who had renounced the world that had abandoned her at the age of seventeen. "Nature had formed her of sulphur and saltpetre; her repressed energy exalted to the highest degree the tenderness of her heart and the vivacity of her mind. Her lack of fortune had caused her to be placed among the lay sisters with whom she had nothing in common except their rude tasks. There are minds that have no need of cultivation. Sainte Agathe [the religious name of this nun], without the help of education, was superior not only to her companions but to most of the Sisters of the Choir." This young woman was the convent drudge; her duty was to wait on the boarders, and, as she was amiable and willing, she was always overloaded with work. Nevertheless, she made time to serve Manon with special care, petted her, gave her the key to her own cell where the little girl found a small library of mystical works, and "a charming canary tame and caressing, which she [Angélique] had taught to speak." This seems surprising, but the eighteenth was a century of talkers, and the known loquacity of nuns may have proved contagious. "*Cette colombe gémissante,*" as Agathe is often called in the Memoirs, was swept out of her dove-cote by the whirlwind of the Revolution (October, 1792). Vegetating on a scanty pension, she was living near Sainte Pélagie when Madame Roland was confined there, and sweetened by her visits and her sympathy her old pupil's captivity.

Manon's dutiful affection for the nuns was soon succeeded by a first passion for a girl of fourteen—I write passion advisedly, for no milder word could express the emotion that for many years tinged the whole texture of Manon's inner life. A clearer, purer flame was never kindled on the altar of friendship—a flame that consumed the thought of self in its votary, that was guarded with jealous care, and nurtured with daily offerings.

Sophie Cannet, the lady paramount of Manon's affections, was a native of Amiens where her parents belonged to the rich *bourgeoisie*. She was her mother's favorite, and, to soften her exile from home, her elder sister Henriette, who had already made her social début, was bundled off to school with her. Henriette considered, not unreasonably, that she had been sacrificed to her sister, but her mother had another motive in cloistering her. This brilliant, handsome girl was in much need of a wholesome restraint that neither Madame Cannet nor the gay, frivolous little world of Amiens could furnish—hence Henriette's return to a convent for a brief season. These sisters possessed no trait in common but their attachment to Manon. "Henriette was frank, even brusque, impatient to irascibility, gay, often a madcap; she was subject to outbreaks of temper which were always followed by most affectionate atonements. You could not help loving even while you scolded her, yet it was difficult to live with her on pleasant and impossible on reasonable terms, for she was as volatile and flighty as she was witty and vivacious."

Sophie was the *Penserosa* of this *Allegra*. "The

sobriety of premature reason characterized her; she did not feel deeply because her head was cool. She loved to reflect and to argue. She was a pitiless reasoner; she wished to analyze, to know, and to discuss everything. I talked much less than she did, and did not lay stress on anything but results. She enjoyed conversing with me, for I was a good listener, and when I did not think as she did my opposition was so gentle for fear of offending her that in spite of all our differences of opinion we have never quarrelled. Three years older than I, and a little less humble, Sophie possessed an external advantage which I did not envy her; she talked prettily whereas I could only answer." Sophie, as one sees her in Madame Roland's letters as well as in the calmer, more detached estimate of the Memoirs, was a somewhat cold, quiet girl, an industrious student, fond of reading, rather self-centred, and lacking interest in others. But she possessed a good mind, and if she never offered help or sympathy she never refused it. A more vivid contrast to her expansive, imaginative admirer cannot be imagined.

It was love at first sight with Manon, a real *coup de foudre*. Sophie appeared in the convent garden, deeply affected by parting from her mother. Her white gauze veil could not hide the tears that bathed her sweet face, and Manon was very naturally impressed, interested, and touched. At supper the Cannet sisters were placed at her table, and Sophie's lack of appetite and silent grief was a mute but potent appeal to an affectionate and imaginative child. "Her sorrow had moved me, her manner pleased me, I felt that in her I had found a friend, and we became inseparable. I

grew fond of her with the self-abandonment which flows from the need of loving at the sight of an object made to satisfy that need. Her company was infinitely dear to me because I needed to confide to some one who understood the sentiments I felt, *and which seemed to increase by being shared.*" Here speaks the offspring of a Latin race, and a social people. To us it seems that an emotion shut deep down in the heart gains in intensity like the close-stopped vial of precious perfume that when unsealed loses its rare potency of fragrance. Henceforth Manon's solitude was *à deux.* "Work, reading, and walks were all shared with Sophie"; and even in their prayers they were not divided, for Sophie's devotion, though less tender and effusive than that of her little friend, was equally absorbing. Together they sought counsels of perfection. Untried and innocent creatures, to them a life of renunciation seemed as easy as it was noble, and they both looked forward to consecrating their young maidenhood to the service of religion.

These pious aspirations were constantly stimulated by their environment. All the observances of monastic life converge upon one central idea,—Eternity. Towards a realization of this grand abstraction all daily rites and pious practices, prayers and meditations, direct the mind, while the significance and beauty of imposing ceremonies penetrate the heart and caress the eye. "Women understand wonderfully well how to set off these services, to accompany these ceremonies with everything that can lend them charm or splendor, and nuns excel in this art. A novice took the veil soon after my arrival at the convent. The church and the

altar were decorated with flowers, with bright candelabra, silk curtains, and magnificent hangings. The large gathering, which filled the outer church, was cheerful as a family appears at the wedding of one of its members. Gorgeously dressed and with a triumphant air, the young victim appeared at the grating in much pomp, which she presently laid aside to reappear covered with a white veil and crowned with roses. I still feel the nervous agitation that her slightly tremulous voice gave me when she chanted melodiously the customary verse: *Elegit*, etc.—'In this place have I chosen my abode and will establish it forever.' [Here the vivid picture fades from the prisoner's mental retina, and the lonely captive cries aloud:] I have not forgotten the notes of this little anthem; I can repeat them as exactly as if I had heard them but yesterday. I would I could sing them in America. Great God! With what accents would I chant them to-day! [Then Memory flashes the vanished vision back again.] When the novice had pronounced her vows, as she lay on the ground, she was covered with a pall, under which one would have thought she was to be buried. I shuddered with terror. She was an image of the absolute rupture of every earthly tie, and the renunciation of all that was most dear to her. I was no longer myself. I was *she*. I thought they were tearing me away from my mother, and I shed floods of tears."

Naturally enough, to a creature of such lively sensibilities, her own first communion was an intense emotional experience. "Prepared by all the means customary in convents, by retreats, long prayers, silence, and meditation, it was considered by me as a solemn

covenant and the pledge of immortal happiness. It fired my imagination and touched my heart to such a degree that, bathed in tears and transported with divine love, I was incapable of walking to the altar without the aid of a nun, who, supporting me under the arms helped me to the Holy Table."

These crises of religious feeling left no fugitive impression on Manon's nature. "Philosophy has dissipated the illusions of a vain belief, but it has not annihilated the effect of certain objects on my senses, or their associations with the ideas that they used to quicken. I can still attend divine service with pleasure if it be performed with solemnity. I forget the charlatanism of priests, their ridiculous fables, and absurd mysteries, and I see only a group of weak men imploring the help of a Supreme Being. The wretchedness of mankind, and the consoling hope of an omnipotent Judge fill my thoughts. Light fancies fade away, the passions are calmed, the love of my duties is revived; if music form a part of the ceremony I find myself transported to another world, and I come away a better woman from a place where the foolish and thoughtless crowd resort to bow before a bit of bread." Alas! That so fine a page should be coarsened with contempt. She continues: "It is with religion as with many other human institutions: it does not change the disposition of the individual, but is assimilated by his nature, and is exalted or debased with it. The mass of mankind thinks little, believes blindly, and acts by instinct so that there exists a perpetual contradiction between the principles it professes and the conduct it pursues. Strong characters act differ-

ently, they demand consistency, and with them action is a faithful translation of belief. In my infancy I naturally received the creed that was offered to me. It was mine until I was sufficiently enlightened to examine it, but until then all my acts conformed to it. I was astonished at the levity of those who, professing a similar faith acted in contradiction to it, as I now am indignant at the cowardice of men who, desirous of possessing a fatherland, value their lives when they are to be risked in its service." Thus the Spartan *citoyenne;* little Manon was still in the idyllic age of faith when the year of convent life which her parents had granted her drew to its close (1766).

It was with a strangely heavy heart that the child bade good-by to all her haunts: the long cloisters where from the walls the epitaphs of nuns long dead pointed out the way to paradise; the chapel where so many blissful hours consecrated to meditation had been passed; and kind Sister Agathe's austerely dainty cell. There were affecting farewells and promises to return soon and often, and to write constantly; there were keepsakes given and portraits exchanged, all the poor little devices by which young affection seeks to render enduring the essentially transitory. At last, however, the many farewells were said, and Manon quitted the house of the Lord "regretted, esteemed, and embraced by the whole sisterhood, and bedewed by the tears of Sophie and Agathe."

To leave them was not, however, to return to her mother, for it had been decided in family conclave that Manon was to pass a year with her grandmamma Phlipon on the island of Saint Louis before returning

home. "Bonne-maman" Phlipon was one of those captivating old ladies who seem the special fruit of the ancient régime in France, mellow fruit delicately preserved, sometimes in the spice of wit, sometimes *confites en dévotion.* "Bonne-maman's" husband had died during the first year of her marriage, and Manon's father was her only child. Poverty obliged her to accept the assistance of some rich relatives, the de Boismorel, who employed her as governess to their two children. A heritage rendered her independent in her later years, and she occupied an apartment on the island of Saint Louis with her maiden sister Mademoiselle Rotisset, appropriately named Angélique. "This worthy maiden, asthmatic and devout, pure as an angel and simple as a child, was the very humble servant of her elder sister." She became Manon's *gouvernante,* while Grandmother Phlipon continued the child's education.

Bonne-maman was an engaging person, still young in heart and spirits. Madame Roland's sketch of her evokes from the silvery dust of the pastel the image of one of La Tour's amiable and witty old ladies. "She was a gracious and sweet-tempered little woman, whose agreeable manners, polished language, winning smile, and sprightly glances still hinted at some pretensions to please, or at least to remind us that she had once pleased. She was sixty-five or -six years old [seventy in 1766], took pains with her dress, which, however, was appropriate to her age, for she prided herself above all things on the knowledge and observance of decorum. As she was very plump, light of foot, extremely erect, with pretty little hands which

she used gracefully, and a touch of sentiment in her conversation qualified, however, with gay but always delicate pleasantry, the traces of age in her were almost imperceptible. She was very fond of young people whose society pleased her, and by whom she was rather proud of being sought."

With this wise worldling and her saintly sister Manon passed her thirteenth year very pleasantly. She had secretly resolved to enter the religious life, and already looked upon the nuns of the Visitation, the daughters of Saint Francis de Sales, as her future sisters. The quiet days with the two old ladies began with early mass as the principal event of the day, an occasional visit to the convent, a letter to Sophie, and plenty of time for reading from Saint Augustine's Manual, and her favorite Philothée, better known to English readers as The Introduction to a Devout Life. No works were more suited to foster a religious temper and to create an atmosphere of celestial illusion in an innocent and ardent soul. Bossuet's controversial writings opened new vistas of thought. "Favorable as they were to the cause they defended, they sometimes stated the arguments against it, and thus set me to weighing my belief." This was Manon's first hesitating step into the dark intricate maze of religious doubt. Meanwhile the letters of Madame de Sévigné fixed her taste and a store of works on mythology awakened her imagination. Occasionally the pleasant monotony of her seclusion was broken by a ceremonious visit, with its irksome preparations, hairdressing, and an elaborate toilette. A morning call on Madame de Boismorel, the rich connection of

Grandmamma Phlipon, is at once so vivid a genre picture, and has been so often quoted as determining the nature of Madame Roland's political opinions that it merits citation.

Madame de Boismorel's singularities had been sometimes the subject of "bonne-maman's" animated talks. This lady, whose children had been educated by Madame Phlipon, was in reality only a rich *bourgeoise*, but she possessed the manners and habits of the noble society in which she moved. She received her confessor, and other less ascetic male visitors in bed and during her morning toilette, and showed no more hesitation in changing her chemise before them than did Madame du Châtelet in bidding a footman add hot water to the tub in which she was bathing. On one occasion when grandmamma begged Madame de Boismorel to control her extravagance for her children's sake, she coolly replied that they were but "secondary considerations." These revelations afforded material for reflection to the admirer of Plutarch's republicans, and naturally led her to make certain comparisons.

Documents are apt to dispel the theory that polished manners and stately courtesies were essentially attributes of the aristocracy, nor were they as diffused as the artists who have preserved only the externals of a society which had refined the forms of politeness into a delicate art, unwittingly persuade us. An instance of the insolence with which even a noble of liberal opinions, and the comrade-in-arms and admirer of American republicans, addressed a *bourgeois* minister of state, is afforded by a recently published letter of Lafayette's. In it he apologized (?) for the rudeness

of his aide-de-camp to one of Roland's clerks, and the original offense is crushed into insignificance by the intolerable haughtiness of the excuse. The same caste feeling was more genially exhibited by Mirabeau, who, on reaching home after the memorable night of the 4th of August, when the nobility renounced titles and privileges, seized his sleepy varlet by the ear and shouted: "*Tu sais, drôle, pour toi je suis toujours Monsieur le Marquis.*" The wealthy *roturiers* whose golden keys unlocked the portals of the patriciate found this tone of impertinent condescension only too easy to acquire, and Madame de Boismorel represents a type of which playwright and novelist have made effective use.

"We arrived," writes Madame Roland, "at the Rue Saint Louis, in the Marais, about noon. As we entered the house, all the servants, beginning with the porter, saluted Madame Phlipon with respect and affection, and she answered cordially and with dignity. So far so good. But then her little granddaughter was noticed, pointed out, and complimented. I began to feel a kind of uneasiness, difficult to explain, but I felt that servants might look at me, but that it was not proper for them to pay me compliments. We go on, a tall lackey calls out our names, and we enter a *salon* where Madame de Boismorel is gravely working on some tapestry, seated, with her lap-dog beside her, on what was called then not an ottoman but a *canapé*. Madame de Boismorel was about the age, height, and figure of my grandmamma, but her dress showed less good taste than a desire to advertise her wealth and social position, and her face, far from ex-

pressing a desire to please, plainly demanded consideration and expressed her consciousness of deserving it. A bit of rich lace puckered into the shape of a small cap with broad wings, pointed at the ends like a hare's ears, perched on her head, showing hair that possibly was false, arranged with the coquettish severity becoming her sixty-odd years; double layers of rouge lent to her expressionless eyes a boldness that was more than sufficient to make me lower mine.

"'Ah, good morning, Mademoiselle Rotisset,' Madame de Boismorel called out in a loud, hard voice as she rose to meet us. (Mademoiselle! What, my grandmother is *Mademoiselle* in this house!) 'Really, I am very glad to see you. And this fine child, your grandchild, of course? She promises well. Come here, sweetheart, and sit down beside me. She is timid. How old is she, your grandchild, Mademoiselle Rotisset? She is rather dark, but her skin is fine; it will clear soon. She has a good figure. You ought to have a lucky hand, my little friend. Have you ever bought a lottery-ticket?'

"'Never, madame; I do not like games of chance.'

"'I believe you—at your age one fancies that one has a sure game. What a voice, sweet and full, but how grave she is! Are you not rather pious?'

"'I know my duties, and I try to perform them.'

"'Good, good; you wish to become a nun, do you not?'

"'I do not know my future, so I do not try to settle it!'

"'How sententious she is; your granddaughter is fond of reading, Mademoiselle Rotisset?'

"'It is her greatest pleasure. She spends half the day in reading.'

"'Oh, I can see that. Take care she does not become a bluestocking, that would be a pity!'

"The conversation then turned upon the family and friends of the mistress of the house. My grandmother asked for news of the uncle and the cousin, the daughter-in-law and the friend, for Abbé Langlois, the Marquise de Lévi, Councillor Brion, and Monsieur Parent, the curé. They talked of the health of all these people, their pedigrees and their eccentricities—for example, of Madame Roudé, who, in spite of her great age, was proud of her neck, and always exposed it except when she got in and out of her carriage; then she covered it with a large handkerchief which she always carried in her pocket for these emergencies, because, as she observed, 'such things were not made to be shown to lackeys.'

"During this dialogue, Madame de Boismorel took a few stitches in her work, petted her little dog, and often stared at me. I took care not to meet her eyes, because I disliked them; but I looked around at the furniture and the decorations of the apartment, which were more pleasing than the lady. My blood ran faster, I felt my color rise, my heart beat quickly, and my breath came short. I did not ask myself then why my grandmamma did not sit on the sofa, or why Madame de Boismorel always called her 'Mademoiselle Rotisset,' but I had the feeling that leads to such questions, and I looked upon the end of the visit as a reprieve from punishment.

" 'Ah, by the way, do not forget to buy me a lottery-

ticket, and have your granddaughter choose the number, do you hear, Mademoiselle Rotisset? I want it from her hand. Kiss me, and you, my little sweetheart; don't cast down your eyes so much. They are good to look at, those eyes, and no confessor will forbid you to open them. Ah, Mademoiselle Rotisset! You will have many bows, I promise you, and that before long. Good day, ladies!' And Madame de Boismorel rang her bell, ordered Lafleur to call in two days' time at Mademoiselle Rotisset's for the lottery-ticket she was to send her, quieted her barking dog, and was already back on her sofa before we had fairly left the room."

Madame de Boismorel's compliments were no more grateful to Manon than those of her servants, and the intelligent and gently bred child shrank instinctively from what she felt to be the coarse flattery and insolent patronage of this would-be fine lady, who called her dignified grandmamma "Mademoiselle," and treated a reserved and rather priggish person of twelve as though she were another lap-dog. Some writers—Taine, for instance—have given great importance to this visit, gravely quoting it as a proof of the future Girondine's *envy* of the *aristocracy*, of its fine manners and many privileges, forgetting that Madame de Boismorel was a connection of her critic's and a *bourgeoise*, not a noble.

This pretentious and vulgar woman had a delicate-minded and considerate son, who soon came to return Madame Phlipon's visit. His deferential affection for her, the tactful manner in which he recalled his relationship and his obligations to his former governess,

would have contented the most exacting of grand-daughters, while his wide reading and philosophical views, disapproved of by his mother and sister, and by their frivolous and bigoted circle of friends and parasites, awakened Manon's respect and interest. In time he became as warm a friend as a married man, moving in another social circle, could be to a lonely girl with whom he had many intellectual sympathies.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS DOUBTS

MEANTIME Manon's year of probation had worn to its close (May, 1767). To return to her home on the busy Quai de l'Horloge after the sleepy quiet of the Ile Saint Louis, was like re-entering the world. The Pont Neuf and its adjoining quais were in the eighteenth century one of the whirling centres of Parisian activity. They were originally the goldsmith's quarter, even before King Henry IV filled up the western end of the island, which now cuts sharply into the river like the prow of a galley, and built the fine lines of houses of which only two remain unspoiled by reconstruction. They recall, in their peaked roofs and pleasant autumnal coloring of warm-toned red brick and russet stone, their contemporary, the historic square of the Place Royale. It was in the second of these two houses which have fortunately remained almost unaltered, the one at the corner of the Place Dauphine and the Quai de l'Horloge that Gatien Phlipon set up his shop and his household gods. His ambitions had grown since his daughter's birth in the sad little Rue de la Lanterne. The returns from his own art, engraving, were too slow for a vain man who was fond of fine things; and enamelling, in which he was an expert, had slightly injured his eyes. Selling jewelry on commission and trading in diamonds was an easier and faster way to luxurious living, and no

HOUSE IN WHICH MADAME ROLAND LIVED AS A GIRL

On the Quai de l'Horloge and the Pont Neuf

artistic objections to commerce trammelled him. Naturally location on the Pont Neuf bettered his chances for business. There truly were possible customers of all kinds. All Paris crossed the bridge, lounged on the quais, and strolled in the Place Dauphine. For two centuries, from Chicot's time to Beaumarchais's day, the Pont Neuf had been a trysting-place for Parisians.

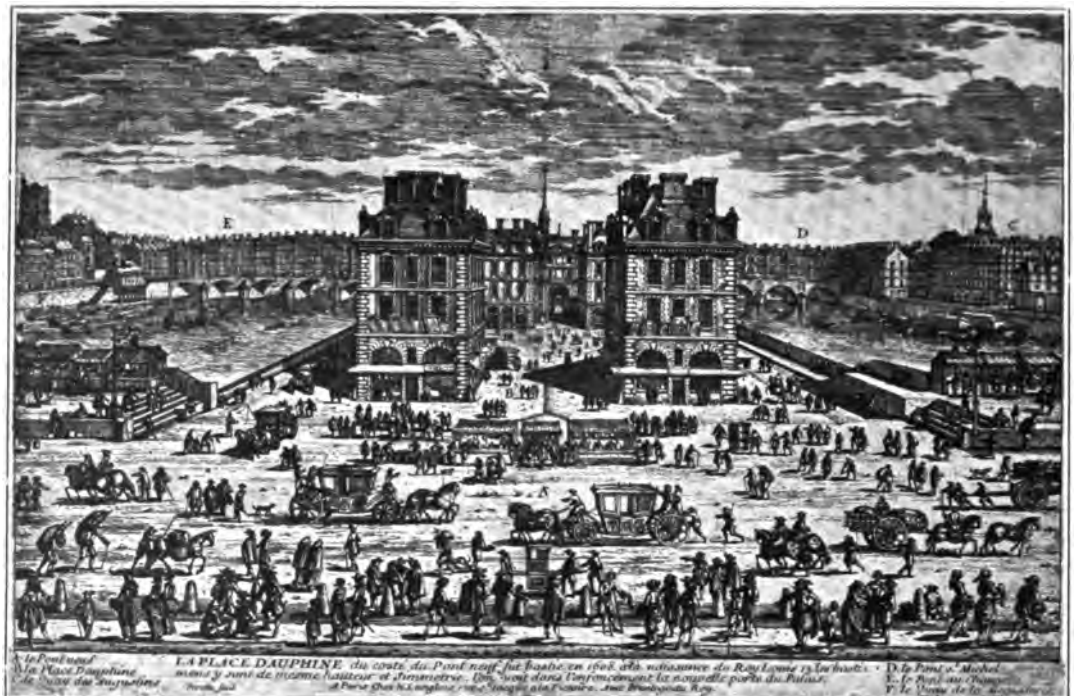
Amid the press of painted coaches and gilded sedan-chairs the files of donkeys laden with green stuff, the cavaliers who pushed their way through a yielding but expostulating crowd, the heavy drays loaded with wine or oil or wheat, the mountebanks set up platforms where they juggled and danced in the midst of the vortex. Here a charlatan was selling an elixir; there an ambulant dentist was pulling a tooth. A powdered fop, seeking a jewelled frame for a beauty's miniature, was jostled by a barefooted friar on his way to Notre Dame. The painted lady of quality rubbed elbows with the high-rouged woman of pleasure, and the gold-laced lackey, hurrying by with a billet-doux, pushed aside the trim housewife on her way to market. A populous place indeed was the neighborhood of the Pont Neuf, if we may trust garrulous Mercier and the old engravings.

The noise and bustle must have reached the second story of the house on the Quai de l'Horloge (now No. 41). A plan of the Phlipons' apartment was made by the architect Duflocq for Dauban after tracing the original walls and partitions under the changes of the last hundred and fifty years. It is a fairly typical bourgeois domicile, consisting of a kitchen, a large

bedroom, a studio containing the engraver's *établi*, working-materials, and many pieces of sculpture, and a pleasant room, neatly furnished, decorated with mirrors and several pictures, which to-day would be called a *salon*, and which modest Madame Phlipon termed a *salle*. In one corner of this *salon* a cabinet or a *niche* had been made by partitioning off the oblong space between the large chimneypiece and the house wall that fronted the Quai de l'Horloge. This tiny cell was lighted by a small window now walled up, probably directly under the commemorative inscription which tells the passer-by that

Madame Roland
Née à Paris
Le 18 Mars 1754
Fut élevée dans cette maison.

The cabinet, or as an English contemporary would have called it, the closet, was just large enough to contain a bed, a chair, a writing-table, and some bookshelves. Eighteenth-century folk cherished these retreats, cosey refuges from the cold and noise and publicity of large and lofty rooms. The tendency to build a snug nest in the midst of surrounding spaciousness grew constantly with the advance of comfort from Madame de Maintenon's portable *niche* of crimson brocade wherein she "tented out" in the frigid splendor of Versailles to the exquisite *petits appartements* of Marie Antoinette. In a less humble home than the Phlipons' the closet would have been a boudoir with its elegant couch, its inlaid embroidery-


E
D
LA PLACE DAUPHINE du costé du Pont neuf fut bastie en 1608 ans naissance du Roy Louis 13 le iuste.
mais il sont de mesme hauteur et symmetrie. Qui sont dans l'enfoncement la nouvelle porte du Palais.

LA PLACE DAUPHINE IN 1608, SHOWING THE ROLAND HOUSE AT THE LEFT

From an old print

frame, and writing-desk; engravings and miniatures on the walls, porcelains and enamels on the shelves, a harp in the corner, and a lap-dog on a cushion. But Manon's closet was as simple as a nun's except for the guitar on the bed and the flowers that for three seasons of the year bloomed on the window-ledge. Beyond the embowered casement lay the long silvery lines of the quays, the shining reaches of the river, the tender, dove-tinted sky of Paris, and the serene sense of space and air.

Manon was truly "a child of the Seine." She had now exchanged the monastic quiet of Saint Louis's isle, her walks with Tante Angélique along its borders, for a magnificent spectacle from her northern window. At the close of a fair day her eyes embraced the vast curve of the celestial vault from the cool, bluish eastern sky far beyond the Pont au Change to the fires of the western heavens flaming behind the dark trees of the Cours la Reine, and outlining in blackest silhouette the peaked roofs and towering chimneys of the village of Chaillot. Here often, after an afternoon of writing or study, Manon leaned out to enjoy the enchanted hour of sunset; the noblest passages in her letters were written in its rosy glamour. Something of her sanity, her health of spirit and body, her deep love of nature, was owing to this constant contemplation of larger horizons than are accorded to most town-dwellers. Her early writings, long before she had read Rousseau, prove how sensitive were eye and heart to the beauties of sky and river, to changing lights and delicate gradations of color. Is it fantastic to believe that if, instead of a "magic casement opening on the

foam," Manon's only window had admitted the dim light of a courtyard or the echoing clamor of a dusky, narrow street, she would have lacked something of her high enthusiasm and serene poise? Her books would have been all to her, nature and beauty less vital and significant. A volume, a theory of life, a system of philosophy, a creed seem small things, variable, unsubstantial, read under the great plain of the sky, or beside the perpetual movement of a mighty stream.

Manon was as fortunate in the possession of privacy as she was in the view from her window, for *bourgeois* life was generally huddled and gregarious. A single living-room, a single fire, and often a single light was the rule. The chimney-place was truly the domestic altar of the French household. President Grosley recalled how his father, when the cold drove him out of his own cabinet, continued his studies in jurisprudence by the kitchen-fire, undisturbed by the yells of a pack of noisy children and the gabble of servants and nurses. Around the hearth of Marmontel's father were gathered his great-grandparents, a grandmother, three grandaunts, and a sister of the house-mother, as well as six children. Filial piety has seldom found fuller opportunity for exercise. The Phlipons and Besnards, however, were well-to-do folk, who preferred living apart to crowding together under one roof-tree; so Manon's closet, filled with books and flowers, was her own kingdom. Here she spent most of her time reading, writing, and studying. "*Cella continuata dulcescit*" to the student as well as to the monk. "The mornings slip away somehow in reading and working. After dinner I go into my little study,

overlooking the Seine; I take a pen, dream, think, and write." "My violin, my guitar, and my pen are three parts of my life," she wrote Sophie Cannet, who soon after Manon left the convent returned to Amiens.

Letters to Sophie filled a third part of Manon's existence, one thinks in turning the pages of a long correspondence in which her girlhood is reflected like a spring landscape in a still lake. "*Un ami est un second logis pour l'âme,*" Manon believed, and her fancies and thoughts constantly winged their way to this other nesting-place. For many years Manon found in Sophie a mother-confessor. "I am a woman, nothing human is alien to me," might have been the device of this sympathetic recipient of varied confidences. Manon's letters were infinitely precious to her less expansive friend. The tiniest note was cherished like a relic. Few love-letters have been so reverently preserved. Marriage ended these effusions, and poor Friendship, shouldered aside by Love, and finally turned out-of-doors by Hymen, became mute. Roland disapproved of intimate relations between his wife and other women—he was a jealous god, and discouraged goddess-worship. "He was wrong," wrote Madame Roland, many years later. "Marriage is grave and solemn; if you take away from an affectionate woman the sweets of friendship with persons of her own sex, you deprive her heart of a necessary aliment, and you expose her to danger."

These letters, given by Sophie's eldest son, the Chevalier de Gomiecourt, to Auguste Breuil, and published in 1841, furnish a valuable commentary to the first part of the private Memoirs. They provide the

"deadly parallel column" by which accuracy, if not veracity, may be tested. They present in a series of delicate vignettes the story of a girl's life in the Paris of Voltaire and Necker, of Crébillon *fils* and Lavoisier. They form a study of the efflorescence of what Hugo called "a soul of purple fire," and the expansion of a mind so penetrating and so active that it invests every object presented to it with a kind of luminous clearness and relief. Thoughts, emotions, experiences, are noted and analyzed, as they rise in mind or heart, or enter from without with the happenings of daily life. The irruption of novel ideas, the modifications of accepted theories, the flowering of sentiment are seized in their inception, captured on the wing, and sent like a votive offering of young doves to Sophie. For though the letters form a journal of the inner life of a girl from the age of sixteen to twenty-five, they are also acts of devotion to a friendship that is marvellously akin to love. The pages glow with loving terms: "*Je vais quitter la plume mais non ta chère image*"; "*Reçois ce baiser de feu*"; and (surely fresh from some old Latin's love-poem) "*Adieu, divine, aie soin de toi pour nous.*" Intelligence is companioned by affection. Tenderness underlies the description of *Systèmes*, accompanies a summary of Delolme's History of England, a criticism of Pope's optimism, or a lesson in physical geography. Every object the young enthusiast touches glows lambently, made living by the warmth of an imagination as brilliant as it is healthy.

All Manon's acquisitions are instantly shared with her friend. A description of every day's work and play is faithfully rendered "to my queen, to whom I

must account for what is hers." A narrative of the events of the outer, as well as the reflections and experiences of the inner, life is set down that the friend in Amiens may have her part in Manon's daily existence. Few lovers have been so assiduous—none so copious. Nor does the abundance of the material lessen the vivacity of its manner. "*Elle était née scribe*," pronounced Michelet. Her letters possess a quality which it is difficult to express; perhaps because in them the defects of the witty, artificial century find no place. These reflections and descriptions are free from the frivolity and the spiritual dryness that were perhaps the inevitable accompaniments of overrefinement and the spread of a positive philosophy. There is a delicate enjoyment, like breathing sweet air or tasting pure, cool water, in the perusal of these chronicles of an outwardly simple life. The good humor of perfect health, the contentment born of simple habits and temperate pleasures, soften even the "violent delights" of new discoveries in books and humanity. The tranquillity of a studious existence, unfretted by material cares, and free from social obligations, rises like a faint fragrance from these records. The seclusion of the girl's life and her lack of social dissipation enabled her to give not only her time to study and reflection but her young vitality as well. It was her habit to read and write not only the greater part of the day but half the night. There was a certain quenchless force in her that seemed inexhaustible, a youthful elasticity that remained with her always, that lent her an "air of freshness and adolescence" even in her prime, and that grief and anxiety could not subdue.

"*J'étudie parce que j'ai besoin d'étudier comme de manger.*" Study is her hygiene of the soul.

It was material for thought that she sought, objects to occupy an active intellect and a vivid imagination, *not* a collection of antiquities, nor a set of showy acquirements for her mental furniture; as matter for reflection was her quest, she read, she did not "read up." Notes were taken, abstracts and extracts made of her daily reading, and the essence of it sent to Sophie, who, poor dear, had no time for books, as her empty hours were passed at cards, at routs, and in conferences with her dressmaker. The social life of a small but gay town left her no leisure for study, and Manon's letters were thus doubly dear to her.

For some time the girls were one in thought, then the inevitable occurred, where one friend reads, examines, and reflects, and the other does not. Through study and inquiry, Manon, the impassioned mystic, was growing into a reasonable and intelligent young woman. Not long after she left the convent she heard the whispers of religious doubt, and felt the necessity of rationalizing her faith (1772).

The first dogma of her creed to which her heart as well as her reason refused assent was, of course, the damnation of all those who had not known or accepted it. Disbelief in infallibility followed the rejection of the doctrine of exclusive salvation. She was evidently deceived, or misunderstood some articles of her religion; it was therefore a duty to examine them all. "From the moment a Catholic has arrived at this point the Church may regard him as lost. What then remains that is true?" Manon asked herself, and her reading,

which had been miscellaneous for several years, was directed to an active and anxious search after truth. Hitherto her attention had been drawn to many subjects. She had fed on the books in the library of her uncle's vicar, where she was left to browse on Sundays and feast-days while her mother and Mademoiselle d'Hannaches played backgammon with the two priests. There was provender for the devout; the works of the Fathers of the Church, and the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, Bossuet's Universal History, and the Letters of Saint Jerome. In the thick of the cowls shone the helmet of Mambrino, and Manon found the dear knight of La Mancha wedged between Jesuit scholars and holy hermits.

The vicar's books devoured, Manon went to the lending libraries for fresh forage. There she found fare for all palates. She chose first translations of the historians of antiquity, followed them with Montesquieu, Locke, and Burlamaqui, and continued rather frivolously with French plays. She had no plans for consecutive reading. She wished to know for the sake of knowledge, and to exercise a keen and active intelligence. She desired happiness like all healthy young creatures, and she sought it in the full development of her faculties. "I know nothing comparable to the fulness of life, of peace, of contentment, of this happy time of innocence and study," she wrote many years afterwards.

To breathe the air of Paris, electrical with intelligence, pollent with ideas; to love study, to possess books and leisure, to be in life's morning, free from cares and insistent duties; with the memory a fair

tablet, the brain unwearied, the mind not yet a palimpsest of accumulated thoughts; while the bitter fruits of the Tree are still the golden apples of the Hesperides is surely to know pure delight. How could Manon *escape* happiness?

Desultory reading now converged towards a focal point. How much of that faith which had been at once a rule of life and her highest source of happiness would remain to her after such research and examination as were in her power to give to it? It was with an unquiet mind and a heavy heart that the girl began the old torturing quest, "Given self, to find God." Manon was no smug, priggish doubter. Her affections and her memories were intertwined with the forms and objects of her religion. To renounce it was to go out naked and alone into a dark, desolate place. Much of the poetry of her outwardly narrow life she owed to the ceremonies, the color and music and emotion made visible, of an elaborate ritual. She clung to the dear familiar forms as the newly made Christian might to the beautiful household gods and the genial observances of pagan worship. And yet that persistent voice of reason would make itself heard, questioning and comparing, above the Latin prayers and the solemn chants.

Manon carried her doubts to her confessor, who immediately equipped her with the works of the defenders of her wavering faith. She read, marked, and annotated these authorities. She made marginal comments in the books themselves which astonished her confessor, and which may still be read by the curious in such matters. She found the justification of her

incredulity and the replies to her queries in the perusal of these controversial works, however, for they supplied her with the titles of the books they endeavored to refute. Resolved to subject all the articles of her creed to the test of reason, Manon obtained the prohibited volumes. They offered the touchstone she sought. Thus D'Holbach's Bon Sens, Maupertuis's Système de la Nature, Voltaire's Essai sur les Mœurs and Dictionnaire Philosophique. D'Argen's Lettres Juives, the De l'Esprit of Helvétius, the works of Diderot, D'Alembert, and the Abbé Raynal were read, criticised, and analyzed.

In her cell at Sainte Pélagie, long afterwards, Madame Roland compressed into a few sentences the essence of several years of meditation and study. "In the midst of doubts, uncertainties, and inquiries relative to these great subjects, I concluded, without hesitation, that the unity of the individual, if I may thus express myself, the most complete harmony, that is to say, between his opinions and actions, was necessary to his personal happiness. Accordingly, we must examine carefully what is right, and when we have found it, practise it rigorously. There is a kind of justice to be observed to oneself even if one lived alone in the world. One should govern all his feelings and habits in order not to be enslaved by any one of them. A being is good in itself when all its parts concur to its preservation, its maintenance, or its perfection; this is not less true in the moral than in the physical world. A well-balanced organization, an equilibrium of humors constitute health; wholesome food and

moderate exercise preserve it. The concord of our desires and the harmony of the passions form the moral constitution of which wisdom alone can secure the excellence and duration. These first principles are based on self-interest, and in this respect it may be truly said that virtue is only soundness of judgment applied to morals. But virtue, properly so called, is born from the relations of a being with his fellow beings; justice to ourselves is wisdom; justice to others is virtue.

"In society all is relative; there is no independent happiness. We are obliged to sacrifice a part of what we might enjoy in order not to lose the whole, and to secure a portion against all attacks. Even here the balance is in favor of reason. However laborious may be the life of the honest, that of the vicious is more so. He who puts himself in opposition to the interests of the greatest number is seldom at peace. It is impossible for him to hide from himself that he is surrounded by enemies, or by those who are ready to become so, and such a situation is always painful, however splendid it may appear. Add to these considerations the sublime instinct [of rectitude] which corruption may lead astray, but which no false philosophy can ever annihilate, which impels us to admire and love wisdom and generous actions as we do grandeur and beauty in nature and the arts—and we shall have the source of human virtue, independent of every religious system, of the mazes of metaphysics, and the impostures of priests. . . . The beautiful idea of a Divine Creator, whose providence watches over the world; the spiritual nature of the soul, and, lastly, its immortality,

that consolation of persecuted and suffering virtue—are these nothing more than lovely and splendid illusions? Yet what clouds envelop these difficult problems! What multiplied objections rise if we try to treat them with mathematical exactness! But no, the human mind is not fitted ever to see them in the light of perfected evidence. What does it matter to the sensitive soul that it cannot *prove* them? Is it not enough for it to *feel* them. . . . The atheist is not, in my eyes, a man of bad faith; I can live with him as well as—even better than—with the devotee, for he reasons more, but he is deficient in a certain sense. . . . He is cold before a ravishingly beautiful spectacle, and he hunts for a syllogism where I offer a thankgiving."

Investigation, then, though it dispelled the superstitions of the girl's religion, left its spirit and its pure and tender personal ideal untouched. Tomes of destructive criticism only enlarged Manon's elevated conceptions of God and of duty. She was still in the age of faith compared to the modern seeker after things divine, for only duty remained to George Eliot, as she sorrowfully confessed to Frederick Myers.

Manon, convinced of the reality of these fundamental beliefs, with her moral code firmly established on a rational basis, kept her scepticism to herself and her director. She daily attended mass with her mother, "for the edification of her neighbor," and she confessed to the priest to whom she had confided her loss of faith. She conformed outwardly, like a patriotic old pagan, who identified the practice of his national religion with his loyalty to his country. To have done other-

wise would have deeply shocked and grieved her parents and scandalized her friends. Manon was no "come-outer," no Protestant. If the spiritual *must* be materialized for the mass of mankind, there were no grander or lovelier forms than those of her own church. As with Manon freer thinking implied in its increased sense of individual responsibility strict rules of living, perhaps her religious life was even more intense than in her convent days. She held that those who cast aside conventional religious restraints were committed to the severest self-control in conduct lest it be suspected that they sought freedom of thought for license in behavior.

"*Une âme droite portée au scepticisme se sent obligée à une vertu exacte et sévère. Sans la pratique de la plus grande justice, elle craindroit de n'avoir secoué le joug que par un désir coupable de se livrer à ses penchants, sans gêne. Faire suppléer les œuvres à la foi, me parait le seul moyen d'éviter les remords.*" (June 9, 1776.) The strictness of her moral code never relaxed. She discovered early in her researches that righteous living is not dependent on orthodox opinions of the nature of the Trinity.

There was another reason for her outward conformity, a powerful one with a proud and sensitive girl. The ewe-lamb who deserted the fold was generally classed with the goats by a cynical public, whose judgment was often confirmed by the caprioles of the emancipated lamb. Naturally enough when an ethical code rests on a basis of theological teaching, it loses its authority when its foundation crumbles. "*La religion est notre etiquette de sagesse.*" "Religion is our

label of virtue" in the eyes of the world, Manon thought, and the wise virgin was careful to keep her certificate of merit in evidence.

Manon's scepticism, then, was a secret to every one except her director until she received a letter from Sophie confessing that her own faith was troubled. The tone of the age affected the most devout as climate affects the most robust. Manon, deeply touched and somewhat reproached by this confidence, so much greater than her own had been, opened her heart and mind at once to her friend. Her doubts and criticisms, inquiries and convictions, were described to Sophie. Manon's letters were always placed on her mother's work-table, that she might look them over before they were posted; she must therefore have known of her daughter's increasing unbelief. The discreet parent never mentioned the subject, however. Manon's reticence may have been an inheritance, or reading the letters may have bored Madame Phlipon. She combated Sophie's opinions, and was sometimes a little unreasonable in her censures of her friend's independence of spirit and lack of deference for authority. Still, this controversial correspondence (for Sophie's letters may be inferred from Manon's replies to them) denotes a high degree of intellectual and social culture and an amiable openness of mind hard to parallel in most religious discussions. Each girl is sincere, even impassioned, and desirous of convincing her friend, and yet their mutual affection remains undiminished by their radical differences. "*Au milieu de tout cela il est bien doux de pouvoir se dire impunément, je ne pense pas comme toi, mais je ne t'en aime pas moins.*"

These letters contain Manon's profession of faith. When a few weeks before her death, in the solitude of her cell, she wrote the credo of her riper years, it was but a summary of her girlish convictions.

"Enlarge your God," Diderot said to his followers, and long before man was emancipated, the idea of deity was freed from the fetters of creed, and also from the limitations of definition. Manon's conception of the Supreme Being pales and brightens with her studies and meditations. "It is only credulity that is always the same, because it no longer reasons on subjects that it has once decided to accept," she explains, to justify her mutations. Sometimes hers was the God that Voltaire discovered at the end of a chain of argument, that moral necessity that should be invented if it did not already exist. Then the rather detached "Father of All" of Pope's "Universal Prayer" received her homage. Rousseau's *Être Suprême*, who had inherited something of the tenderness of the Good Shepherd of her childhood's orisons, won her allegiance. For though justice seems to Manon the most godlike of attributes, it is the thought of the Divine Love that appeals irresistibly to her.

On one page she assures Sophie that the existence of God is self-evident; the order and harmony of the universe bear witness to the operation of a Supreme Intelligence. A little later she confesses: "I believe a Being necessary, but I do not know what He is, and I do not try to define Him. It is impossible for men to have exact ideas. I refuse the definitions that are given me because they seem contradictory to me. We do not know enough about the essence of things to

assign to matter all the properties which it is or is not susceptible of possessing. Spiritual substance seems to me either a confused assemblage of negations or only vague, undetermined notions. I know nothing about it and I do not complain; it is the destiny of my nature, which was not made to reason about things that I cannot understand. The science of living is the only one that is within my power, and it is independent of chimerical speculations; examination of them has left me unaffected.

"What an inconceivable being we have made of the Divinity! Men have lent God their passions, and judge Him by themselves. Infinite wisdom united to supreme power is necessarily benevolent, it perfects or it annihilates." It is only in the study that she doubts; when her heart speaks, she loves and prays as in her childhood: "*L'esprit a beau s'avancer, il ne va jamais aussi loin que le cœur.*" "Every time that I walk in quiet meditation with peace in my soul, through a smiling landscape whose every charm I feel, it is a delicious thought that I owe these blessings to a Divine Intelligence. I love and long to believe. It is only in my dusty study, poring over my books, or in the giddy crowds of the world, that sentiment withers away, and reason looms darkly behind clouds of doubt and the poisonous exhalations of unbelief."

Beauty to Manon is the sacrament of heaven. Under the dome of the firmament, or in the vast aisles of the forest, she is filled with an ecstasy of joy and gratitude, akin in degree though not in kind to that of the saintly visionary. Leaning out of her lattice into the ineffable glories of the sunset, she wrote: "O Thou, whose exist-

ence my reason almost denies, but whom my heart yearns for, and burns to adore, First Intelligence, Supreme Ordainer, all good and powerful God who I love to believe art the creator of everything that is grateful to me, receive my worship, and if Thou art but an illusion, be Thou mine forever." Was not this longing its own fulfilment? Her petition was answered. The *chimère divine* remained with her when all her earthly illusions had vanished. "Just God receive me," she prayed before she went to death as to a triumph.

If Manon's conceptions of the inconceivable fluctuated, her ideas of duty suffered no change. The humanitarian movement of the age found a vibrating response in her generous mind. Not only to love your neighbor but to serve him was the new gospel. Not new either, but a beautiful old one with a novel motive power. To a Latin, society and the individual's relations to it were of primary importance. The stoics ceased to influence Manon because she could not follow counsels of perfection that isolated the individual and suppressed the affections. "My passion, or my present illusion, if one may call it so, has for its object the general good. The vocation of man is sociability, his first duty is to be useful. In my eyes the chief and finest of virtues consists in the love of the public good, in that of the unfortunate, and in the wish to help them."

Manon's benevolence was not limited to a mere wish to aid the unfortunate. She found ample exercise for beneficence near at hand, and her charities were her only extravagance. There was always some one

who needed her money more than she did, and her dress allowance generally clothed somebody else (January 13, 1776); poverty irked her only when it restricted her generosity. Occasionally she appealed to Sophie for help, which was always bountifully bestowed.

Two of her protégés were always with her. One was "*le gentilhomme malheureux*," a M. de Chalms, an impoverished nobleman and his wife. These people, who were as accomplished as they were unfortunate, desired to open a school, and Manon borrowed of Sophie the money which they were obliged to deposit before doing so. A year or so afterwards, knowing that they were still embarrassed, Manon repaid it herself. "*La Petite Leveilly*," the daughter of a boon companion of M. Phlipon, was cared for by Manon for several years. (*Vide* the Cannet Letters from October 31, 1775, to May 29, 1778.) "She is a poor little creature, very unhappy, whose lot is to weep and to work." Her father was idle and dissipated, and her guardian, a man of some position, offered to buy his daughter of him. Manon rescued the girl, who was hardly more than a child, and found her lodgings, clothes, and work. *La Petite*, who painted fans, could by toiling from five o'clock in the morning until midnight earn enough to keep alive. Manon, who mothered her, petted her occasionally, took her to the Luxemburg gardens, to church, and to visit her friends. She was so tender of the *Petite's* self-respect that she learned fan-painting of her that the child might not feel that the obligation was all on one side. Manon objected to M. Phlipon's inviting her to the family dinner on New

Year's day, because it seemed like advertising her own beneficence, "like exhibiting her in my livery." "Send her a message; she is as sensitive as we are," Manon wrote Sophie, who had given her money for the *Petite's* necessities.

While always guarding the girl's dignity, Manon ventured to advise and warn her. "She has sworn to me, many times, with her hands in mine, that she will always be faithful to virtue . . . and if she should cease to be virtuous, I shall admire her for having long remained so."

Doubting Manon encouraged her protégée's pious practices, for the sceptic was convinced "of the sweetness and strength of religious ideas to charm away the evils of life, while philosophy only lays upon us the yoke of inevitable necessity." (April 25, 1778.) The poor little Leveilly was in need of all the consolation her faith could bestow. She was dogged by misfortune. Her good-for-nothing father shared her tiny earnings, ill-treated her when she refused to help him, and prevented her from taking the situations that Manon and Sister Agathe found for her. Work failed, and in her absence the lock of her chamber door was forced and her small possessions stolen. The lot of *une petite ouvrière en chambre* was as hard in the eighteenth century as it is in the twentieth, and after Manon left Paris the girl lost heart; she had no one to protect her against her father and her guardian. Manon finally was obliged to limit her admiration to the poor girl's past as she had promised herself she should do if it became impossible to esteem her present. Among the last words that Madame Roland

wrote before her execution were a few brief lines of regret for her lost *Petite.*

Desire of service, a new form of self-dedication to an ideal of sacrifice, had heightened Manon's interest in public affairs and widened her mental horizon. Even her benevolence was generalized: "Although the obscurity of my birth, name, and position seem to preclude me from taking any interest in the government, yet I feel that the common weal touches me in spite of it. My country is something to me, and the love I bear it is most unquestionable. How could it be otherwise, since nothing in the world is indifferent to me? I am something of a cosmopolitan, and a love of humanity unites me to everything that breathes. A Carib interests me; the fate of a Kaffir goes to my heart. Alexander wished for more worlds to conquer. I could wish for others to love."

This latitude of mind proved as consoling as it was stimulating, and minimized the increasing personal privations of Manon's life. "I heard this evening of the resignation of M. Turgot. It vexed and *stunned* me. One of his financial measures has acted hurtfully on my father's affairs, and therefore on mine also. But it is not by private interests that I judge him." (May 17, 1776.) Fine sentiments are surely of practical utility when they reconcile the taxpayer to a flattened purse. Let the egotist complain of his curtailed income! Is there not solace for the larger-hearted, broader-minded in the thought: "*Quand on n'est pas habitué à identifier son interêt et sa gloire avec le bien et la splendeur du général, on va toujours petitement, se recherchant soi-même, et perdant le but auquel on doit tendre*"?

Not very novel to-day this view of public affairs, which is stuff of the conscience to many of us, but it is owing to the innovators of the Revolution that such ideas have now become usual, almost commonplace. It was this conviction that drove famished recruits against the veteran armies of Europe, and sent the Republic's ideals with her victories on their triumphal march over the continent.

Manon's preoccupation with general ideas did not crowd out a lively interest in herself, an interest that might have grown morbid if her intellectual curiosity had not been exercised on many objects. *Le moi intérieur*, though kept under close observation, was only one of her subjects of thought. It is rather surprising to discover in the notes of this little Parisienne, so long before Goethe, sentences like these:

"The knowledge of ourselves is no doubt the most useful of the sciences. Everything tends to turn towards that object the desire to know which is born in us, a desire we try to satisfy by acquainting ourselves with the histories of all past nations. This is by no means a useless habit if we know how to avail ourselves of it. My views in reading are already very different from those I entertained a few years ago; for I am less anxious to know facts than men; in the history of nations and empires I look for the human heart, and I think that I discover it too. Man is the epitome of the universe; the revolutions in the world without are an image of those which take place in his own soul."

The soul! That was the only element possessed of absolute and ultimate value in the whole universe.

Manon, like poor Malvolio, thought "nobly of the soul." It stood for personality, for character, for conscience, and was identical with free will. Self-command and self-study purified and strengthened it. "Let us endeavor to know ourselves; let us not be that factitious thing which can only exist by the help of others. *Soyons nous!*" Manon wrote, the social instinct momentarily in abeyance to the need of self-expression. But a mind developed by study, ripened by reflection, does not manifest itself in pure self-assertion. Manon's aim was not to express her personality but to *understand* it. Her endeavor was to render her ego intelligible to herself, not audible to others. Spiritual as well as mental cultivation was included in her scheme of living. "She was prodigiously industrious in the economy of her life," said her earliest biographer, Dauban, and no one has said better.

Naturally avid of admiration, her habitual self-scrutiny preserved her from the form of vanity peculiar to her sex. A woman without a positive sense of value sets no store by herself *per se*. She tries to acquire worth in others' estimation by exciting their admiration, or at least attracting their attention. Self-respect is based on the consciousness of an innate sense of value, on the constancy and freedom of the character and the will—in a word, the personality. Self-respect, therefore, cannot be acquired through the consideration of others, no matter how admiring or worshipful their attitude may be. Women in the eighteenth century were generally not only in functional dependence on men, but were often moral parasites with no vigorous structural existence of their own. Manon, by sheer

force of character and mental industry, unconsciously achieved a spiritual independence inestimably precious when she became the cynosure of a group of eloquent and brilliant young men.

CHAPTER V

FIRST SUITORS

MEANWHILE Manon had, instinctively following Lady Montagu's advice to studious ladies, concealed her acquirements as though they had been deformities. During these years of solitary thought and reading, she was leading the simple, wholesome life of the young girls of her class. She shared her parents' gayeties and contributed to them. These were often family festivities, birthdays and anniversaries where children were expected to entertain their elders. A surprise was always counted on at these parties. Sometimes it was a copy of congratulatory verses, written out laboriously in the young poet's best calligraphy, or a compliment neatly engraved, and bordered with billing doves and beribboned wreaths. Occasionally Flora or Pomona in an eclectic classic costume would present flowers, or offer fruit to the company. Frequently there was more ambitious mumming, and a quartet of shepherds and shepherdesses of the Dresden-china variety would make music, for every young person played at least one instrument "indifferent well," or a rustic ballet was danced by unnaturally tidy peasants who were apt to lose their wooden shoes. All France loved acting and masking. Opportunities were not lacking even among shopkeepers for the display of "*talents de société*," and Manon danced and

fiddled, and rhymed and engraved, to her heart's and her parents' content.

There were also the public exhibitions of fine and industrial art, and the antiquities and curiosities that Paris has always offered her spoiled children. Holidays came often, and the Phlipons observed them devoutly. Public promenades, palace-gardens, and the noble forests that still encircle the city with a royal girdle were visited in turn. "'Where shall we go tomorrow if the weather be fine?' said my father on Saturday evenings in summer, looking at me with a smile. 'Shall we go to Saint Cloud? The fountains are to play; there will be a crowd of people.'

"'Ah, papa, I should like it far better if you would go to Meudon.'"

So to Meudon they went often—Manon in a simple, fresh muslin gown with a gauze veil and a nosegay for all ornament, and for baggage a poetry book. They embarked at Port Royal in a small boat which landed them on the shores of Belleville, then steep paths and a stiff climb led them to the Avenue of Meudon. The Phlipons strolled in the park, explored the forest, gathered spotted ferns and woodbine, watched the deer, and napped at noon on beds of leaves in the clearings. They dined with one of the Swiss foresters, and supped on warm milk in some rustic dairy. One day they made a discovery that charmed Manon and served to illustrate for her the pastoral idyls of her revered ancients. In an unfrequented part of the wood the little party came upon a pretty, snug cottage; two children were playing at the door, "who had none of those signs of poverty so common in the country,"

Manon noted significantly. Their grandfather was at work in a well-kept kitchen-garden, was a robust and cheerful old man, who reminded the reader of Virgil of his rustic on the banks of the Galesus. If she had been familiar with Longus or Tatius, the square *potager* with its mingling of *utile et dulce*, of vegetables and flowers, its central basin and shady arbor, would have recalled the gardens of Greek romances.

The Phlipons dined *al fresco* under a honeysuckle on fresh eggs, vegetables, and salad, played with the children, chatted with the old man, and promised to return some day for a longer stay. Our true possessions are in our minds; Horace was not more content in the ownership of his "little Sabine farm" than Manon with this glimpse of rural life. They were good days, those passed in the forests of Meudon, Montmorenci, or Vincennes. They left bright memories, illuminated pages rich with the gold of sunshine filtering through leaves, the green of deep verdure, and the brilliant flower-tints of gathered blossoms, in Madame Roland's records.

The sense that Sainte-Beuve has delicately characterized as "*le sentiment du vert*" was instinctive in this town-bred girl. From her childhood, in her holiday rambles in woods and fields, she had felt the mysterious allurement of the great earth-mother. It was not alone the relaxation of nervous tension, nor the expansion of the senses, the elation of renewed vision, of mere delight in bodily functions, respiration, for instance, which are Nature's gifts to man when he returns to primitive conditions and lays his head on her breast, that Manon felt in her returns to Nature.

It was exaltation, a swift tenderness, an upwelling of grateful adoration to the Author of Beauty that dilated the heart of a girl. Alone in the deep glades of the forest while her parents slept, she sought to lighten her spirit, burdened with an excess of emotion, by seeking beyond all this visible loveliness a creative and responsive intelligence to receive her homage.

Naturally enough, the public promenades were less pleasing to a young devotee who was fast becoming a philosopher. Those *coups de chapeau* that Madame de Boismorel had predicted began to appear, accompanied by glances that even the most modest of maidens could not fail to understand. Admiration and the expression of it is not stinted to pretty girls in Latin countries, and in the Jardin du Roi (now des Plantes), in the gardens of the Arsenal and the Luxembourg, they ran a gauntlet of appraising looks and approving whispers. Sensitive and always desirous of pleasing, Manon returned from her walks in a flutter of excitement, but her good sense soon humbled her girlish vanity. Pride, too, that powerful factor in the shaping of her character and career, suggested that the praise of a crowd, composed of individuals who were probably unworthy of regard, should be indifferent to a young person of serious views. In her own room she blushed as deeply for her silly agitation as she had at the flattering murmurs of those strange young men. How inept it was for a reasoning being to waste time in trying to attract the ignorant and frivolous. Those foolish little thrills of vanity, which she had felt under the rather insolent homage of glowing eyes, were unworthy of one who was called to noble duties and sweet

tasks. Curiously enough, the appearance of those *coups de chapeau* was synchronous with Manon's change of view in regard to her own destiny, her substitute of the domestic for the monastic ideal. Decline of faith in dogma had led (the girl, clear-headed as she was, and devoted to analysis, could hardly explain how) to a secularization of her aspirations. She now in the light of awakened reason dedicated herself anew to a holy estate—that of matrimony.

It was indeed holy in Manon's fancy, "all made of faith and service, all adoration, duty, and observance." In her reflections on marriage Manon was so occupied with the obligations of the wife that she overlooked the duties of the wife's husband. He was only a misty figure as yet, but an awesome being girt with awful power, philosophic in his opinions, extremely learned, and very exacting. Nevertheless, Manon fully expected, by diligently cultivating her mind and subduing her temper, to become an unfailing source of felicity to this arbitrary lord, who would reward her virtues by giving her dear little children whom she could bring up according to the theories of Locke and Fénelon (she had not yet read Emile), and teach (blissful thought!) all the delightful things she was herself learning. Her mission was to fit herself for this career by diligent study instead of planning pretty gowns and bewitching caps for the subjugation of peripatetic males. Marriage, then, its sacrifices, its abnegations, and its great recompense, maternity, for the loss of liberty, and increase of care, she now decided was her true vocation.

The nubile youths of her neighborhood were also

of her opinion, and a procession of suitors began, as many and varied as that of a princess in Perrault's fairy-tales. An only daughter, the sole heiress of an apparently prosperous engraver and of childless relatives with comfortable incomes, was, of course, a desirable *parti*. When the young person added to her expectations an arch, fresh face, all lilies and roses, smiles and dimples, a rounded, graceful figure, and a reputation for wit and cleverness, the *levée en masse* of the men of her quarter is easily accounted for. Manon experienced no personal elation, and found all this courtship quite the natural order of things. She observed philosophically that "from the moment that a young girl reaches maturity a swarm of lovers hovers around her like bees about a newly opened flower." Among these bees were two poor grasshoppers: Mignard, Manon's violin master, a colossal, bearded Spaniard, whose name contrasted piquantly with his appearance, and Mozon, her dancing teacher. The family butcher, in the splendors of a Sunday toilet, "*bel habit noir et fine dentelle*," laid his heart and his fifty thousand écus at her feet. Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief, set up their candidatures, one after another or several at a time. Owing to the gradual infiltration of art through all classes of society, its practitioners were social hybrids. They touched the people with one hand, the aristocracy and the court with the other. Gatien Phlipon's daughter, with a handsome dowry, might, through marriage, enter a higher circle, that of the De Boismorels, for instance, for though an eminent scientist, a painter of distinction, a celebrated writer might not have the *grandes entrées*, a side-door

TERMINAL BUST CALLED PORTRAIT OF MADAME ROLAND
Sculptured by Chinard and now in the Edmond Aynard Collection at Lyons

was open to them into the great world. But it was not this consideration that influenced Manon in her unhesitating rejection of tradesmen. She had an ideal, a rather stern and austere ideal for an enthusiastic and affectionate girl. The lover of her choice must be a philosopher. At fourteen she had admired a man of the world; at sixteen a wit; but at eighteen her taste was formed, and she never afterwards wavered from her preference for a philosopher.

Commerce Manon would have none of; "it was incompatible with delicate sentiments and elevated ideas." The rich jeweller or cloth-dealer was as small-minded as the petty mercer. In greed and ruse and obsequiousness one equalled the other. M. Phlipon was pained to hear such opinions; he had mildly approved his daughter's prompt rejection of small or poor tradesmen, but a master jeweller with a fine shop and aristocratic customers—pray what *would* suit her? "Only a man to whom I can communicate my thoughts, and who shares my feelings," replied the idealist. "And such a man is not to be found among merchants?" queried the disappointed parent.

"*Tenez, Papa:* I have observed too often that success in trade depends on selling dear what one has bought cheap, by a good deal of lying, and oppression of the poor working man. Never could I countenance such practices, and never could I respect the man who from morning until night devotes his time to them. I wish to be a good wife, and how could I be faithful to a man who had no place in my esteem, even admitting the possibility of my marrying such a one? To me it seems that selling diamonds and selling pastry

are very much the same thing, except that the latter has a fixed price, requires less deceit, but soils the hands more. I do not like one better than the other."

"Do you believe then that there are no honest people in trade?"

"I will not say that absolutely, but I am persuaded that there are hardly any; and let them be ever so honest, they have not what I require in a husband."

"You are difficult to please. Supposing you do not find your ideal?"

"Then I will die an old maid."

"That may be a harder fate than you imagine. Besides, you will have time enough to think it over. But remember, *ennui* will come some day, the crowd will have gone, and you know the fable."

"Oh, I will revenge myself on the injustice that denies me happiness by taking pains to deserve it."

"Ah! there you are in the clouds. It may be pleasant to soar to such heights but difficult, I fear, to remain there. Remember, too, that I should like to have grandchildren before I am too old."

Poor M. Phlipon! He was puzzled and annoyed. Here then was the sad result of too much reading and reflection. Plutarch was an evil counsellor for a *fille à marier*, and a course of ethical philosophy was but a poor preparation for practical life. The engraver, in spite of his opposition, was a singularly indulgent father, he never attempted to use his authority in forcing a favorable decision, and Manon was allowed to write refusal after refusal. M. Phlipon at first derived an attenuated pleasure from copying and signing these elegant compositions, but as time

went on and his daughter continued to read, make music, and write to Sophie, with apparently no thought of the morrow of celibacy, his patience wore thin. Even Mama Phlipon, who had with a tact and forbearance truly exceptional in a managing French mother, refrained from giving advice or reproof, was impelled to remonstrate with her exacting daughter. Her own health had been failing for some time, her husband had become less industrious, more fond of pleasure in growing older, and she was doubly desirous of seeing her only child happy in a home of her own.

Manon's childish reverence for her mother had deepened with time. She saw that the harmony of the little household, the peace that may survive happiness, which had enveloped her own young life like a balmy atmosphere, was entirely owing to her mother. The girl noticed, too, with a weight at her heart, her father's frequent absences from home, his diminishing custom, his neglect of his workmen, and the falling off of his own work. She could not fail to perceive that while his eye and hand lost their sureness and steadiness, his irritability and dictatorial humor increased. The seductions of the tavern and the lottery were naturally more powerful than the sober charm of an evening at home with madame reading Delolme's English History aloud, while Manon knotted fringe or mended napkins. A family party of old relatives playing piquet for *gros sous* naturally seemed insipid to a man familiar with the fiercer delights of a gaming-table. Madame Phlipon's gentle remonstrances were laughed at, or met with real or assumed anger. When she failed to change her husband's actions or opinions, she ap-

peared to abandon her own views and silently consumed her worries and forebodings. M. Phlipon still loved his wife and daughter tenderly, but he loved other things also, things which they could not appreciate, which, indeed, he would have been much chagrined to have them appreciate. Yet the narrowness of their comprehension rasped him, and a sense of their blind injustice in desiring to deprive him of what they could not enjoy kept him in a continual state of smothered exasperation. Manon was more aggressively irritating than his self-effacing wife. She had constituted herself her mother's watch-dog, and would not suffer her to be teased or worried. She also often interfered with her father's plans for private recreation by proposing walks and excursions with him which were difficult to avoid. Even when he managed by shortening the promenade or the visit to escape, his own diversions were naturally curtailed. Sometimes when after saying before supper that he would run out for a moment only, he returned home very late, he found his womankind sitting up for him, red-eyed and anxious. Occasionally Manon was inconsiderate enough to mention how distressed they had been by his absence, and did not consider a pleasantry, or a sulky and silent retreat, an adequate apology or explanation.

When left alone again, the women would weep together, but they never discussed his faults. "For her sake," wrote Madame Roland of her mother, "I would combat even her husband, but afterwards this husband became my father, of whom neither of us ever spoke but in praise." No outsider would have seen

that happiness, that shyest and fleetest of mortal visitants, had flown from the little household, but every outsider of the Phlipons' practical-minded social circle would have sympathized with madame's desire to see her daughter settled in life.

One day she, with unusual earnestness, pressed the suit of a young jeweller, who was the latest aspirant. To a list of his moral qualities and his worldly possessions she added: "He is acquainted with your singular way of thinking, professes great esteem for you, will be proud to follow your advice, and has already said that he has no objection to his wife becoming the nurse of his children. You will rule him."

"But, mama, I don't want a man that I can rule. He would be like a grown-up child."

"You are certainly an odd girl, for you don't want a master either."

"Let us understand each other, dear mama. I would not at all wish a man to dictate to me, for he would only teach me to resist, nor should I wish to order my husband about. If I am not much mistaken, these tall, bearded creatures seldom fail to feel that they are the stronger sex. Now the good man who should think proper to remind me of this superiority would provoke me; and I should blush for him, on the contrary, if he allowed me to rule."

"I understand. You prefer to rule a man who while he believes he is having his own way is obeying you," retorted mama, making a fairly successful effort to define the black swan of her daughter's theories.

"Not exactly that. I hate servitude, but I am not made to rule; it would be a burden to me. My reason

finds enough to do in governing myself. I would win the tenderness of some one worthy of my esteem; one whom I could honor myself by obeying; who, guided by reason and affection, would find his own happiness in promoting mine."

"Happiness, my child, is not always the result of the perfect congeniality that you imagine. . . . A good and worthy man offers you his hand; you are over twenty, and can no longer expect as many lovers as you have had in the last five years. . . . Do not reject a husband who has not, it is true, the delicacy to which you affix such value (a very rare quality even among those who pretend to it), but who will love you tenderly, and with whom you may be happy."

"Yes, dear mama," Manon exclaimed with a deep sigh, "happy as you are."

Madame Phlipon started, grew silent, and never again pleaded for a *mariage de raison.*

Manon enjoyed unusual liberty in her choice of a husband, but in general the young girl of the *petite bourgeoisie* was allowed to consult her own inclinations far more freely than was the noble demoiselle. It was an arduous life, dignified by labor, sobered by responsibility, that the *bourgeoise* faced in marriage, which to her was a compact instead of an emancipation. It bestowed few rights and many duties. It closed the door upon social pleasures, instead of opening it wide. In the married life of the Third Estate the husband was to be reckoned with. He had not abdicated his authority as had the patrician, and left the command of the household to his wife. He still occupied the dominant position of the primitive male. He disposed

not only of his wife's happiness but of her money as well. She had not a possession or a pleasure of which he might not deprive her. Not only her welfare but that of her children was in his hands. Hence the importance of wisely choosing such an absolute monarch. Husband and wife lived very closely together in the *bourgeoisie*, and marriage was without mitigating circumstances. It lacked the larger means, the ampler quarters, and the individual liberty that padded the conjugal yoke of the higher classes. It was not an association of two fortunes and two indifferences, but an indissoluble union of interests, if not of affections.

Much was required of the wife. To her, duty was something more than a word. In an age of brilliant, phosphorescent corruption, of witty mockery of all things, the fireside of the Third Estate was the sanctuary of the household virtues and the domestic pieties, and the priestess of that hearth-fire was the *bourgeoise*. Habituated to self-sacrifice, and inured to labor, she looked at life with a certain austerity. The right to happiness that her contemporaries believed in, and preached so ardently, she did not quite accept, and substituted for it the right to make others happy. She possessed the dignity of one who asks little, who renounces without complaint—a dignity equal to the unconscious majesty of the noble lady to whom all was accorded. Without the character and virtues of the *bourgeoisie*, the Revolution would have been but a revolt. From these quiet homes issued the soldiers of the Republic. By the daily abnegations of these modest households the servants of the new state had been trained in habits of self-command, of industry

and frugality. From these obscure treasures of moral energy immense reserves of fortitude and tenacity were drawn for the service of the fatherland. It was the moral vigor and the homely virtues of the *bourgeoisie* that preserved France during the convulsions of the Terror, and upheld the national honor when the artificial structure of her brilliant and superficial society crumbled away.

A keen sense of these responsibilities was naturally felt by a stern young moralist like Manon, who in her mother had always before her a very model of wifely conduct. Not that Madame Phlipon was a Patient Griselda. Indeed, no Frenchwoman, that essentially sensible and reasonable being, could ever attain such a heroic height of insensibility as that Italian paragon of wives, who allowed her children to be carried off to be murdered without an expostulation. Long-suffering and high-minded as was her mother, Manon soon perceived that the moral inequality between her parents made for unhappiness, and, resolute to escape shipwreck on that particular rock, continued to refuse mediocrity even when it was golden.

"Mere force of intellect was not a sufficient qualification in a husband unless there were also superiority of judgment and those indefinable but palpable qualities of soul the lack of which nothing can supply." A philosopher, who was also a man of sentiment and a scholar, remained Manon's ideal—no matter how aged and damaged, how harsh-featured or ill-favored he might be. The beauties of mind, the charms of character alone, were sought by this young enthusiast.

MARIE MARGUERITE BIMONT—MOTHER OF MADAME ROLAND
Pastel by Latour, in the Museum of Lyons

She would have considered Romeo a love-sick boy, Lovelace a stereotyped lady-killer, as tiresome as he was impudent, and the Chevalier Faublas she would have laughed at—before she boxed his ears. The man of her heart, or, more truly, of her fancy, was a less resigned Marcus Aurelius, or a more energetic Vicar of Wakefield. To her notion, even when she had ceased, as a good Cartesian, to deify the intellect, a lover, like a man, to be worthy of his name, should *think*. Thinking, the act of it (one not so easy to perform, by the way) alone opened the portals of the mind to divine messengers, to truth and justice. From straight thinking sprang righteous action (Manon did not take antinomianism into account); impartiality, consideration for the rights of others, respect for their opinions through comprehension of differing standards and points of view—in fine, a mental attitude, "*avec laquelle une femme qui pense pouvait vivre.*"

Alas! in an age of such general diffusion of intelligence, why was there, in the Phlipons' social circle at least, such a dearth of philosophers—under sixty and unappropriated? Were the fruits of wisdom ripened solely by a declining sun? Or gathered only in the shadow of oncoming night?

"When miracles are expected, they happen," said a devout friend of mine, lamenting the sterilizing effect of general scepticism. Manon searching with her little lantern of enthusiasm for a philosopher was fated to find one. Intellect is inimical to beauty, as it destroys that balance in the distribution of vital force that makes for comeliness; naturally enough, Manon's sage was small, plain, and insignificant. The lady of

Toboso was but an uncouth country wench to eyes untouched by the fire divine. Madame Roland's unattractive portrait of Pahin de la Blancherie, drawn years afterwards, is very different from the contemporary sketches from life that she sent to Sophie. Her imagination was kindled by the apparent delicacy and respectful regard of an ambitious young man of letters, with whom she had so much more in common than with the goldsmith of the Pont Neuf or the rich silk merchant. Manon met D. L. B., as she calls him in her letters to her confidante, at Madame L'Epine's concerts. He had already prepared himself for the bar, travelled in America, and written a book; he had studied the philosophers, knew his Rousseau by heart, and wrote verses. This was enough, and more than enough, to attract Manon, and she tells Sophie of her father's rejection of D. L. B.'s suit, which soon followed, with a touch of real though resigned regret. "He seemed to me to have a good heart, much love for literature and science, art and knowledge. In fact, if he had an established position, were older, possessed a cooler head, a little more solidity, he would not have displeased me. Now he has gone and doubtless thinks as little of me as I do about him."

It was La Blancherie's lack of an established position that obliged M. Phlipon to decline his offer rather reluctantly. "I wish he were less of a gentleman, and had an income of a few more thousand crowns," papa admitted to his daughter. "Let him buy a place in the magistracy or open a law office *first*, and *then* think about marriage." Manon did not find D. L. B. less interesting because he had been attracted by her, and

had privately decided to "study" him more closely, when he was called away to Orleans, and remained there for two years.

On his return (October 31, 1775) he found Manon lonely, troubled, and depressed. Her mother had died in June, and her father's idleness and dissipation had increased since she had last seen "the man of Orleans," as she called La Blancherie in her letters. She was alone when he reappeared, pale and worn, apparently by care and anxiety. His cordial greeting, his undisguised joy at seeing her again, and his quick sympathy touched the bereaved girl's heart. At first their conversation was "of few words and many sighs"; later D. L. B. asked for the details of her mother's illness and death, and Manon derived a pensive pleasure from living her sorrows over again with a friend who mourned with her. A little rainbow must have shone in the midst of their tears when she confided to him that she had spoken of him with her mother on their last day together under the honeysuckles at Meudon. At this moment M. Phlipon with a friend broke in upon the tête-à-tête. D. L. B., still weeping, fell upon his neck, and there followed a moment of general *attendrissement* that Greuze might have painted or Rousseau described.

When they had dried their tears, D. L. B. adroitly profited by an instant when the elders were occupied to confess that he too had lost his mother, though not by death, through differences of opinion, and that his book was published. Indeed, he left the corrected proofs of it for her to read later in secret and in haste, for the Orleans printer was importunate. Manon

discovered in this work her own principles, her whole soul. "I do not dare to judge this young man; he resembles me too closely. I can only say of him what I said to M. Greuze about his picture: 'If I did not love virtue already, this would give me the taste for it.'"

"Oh, Rousseau, Rousseau, it was all thy fault!" Manon had been rereading La Nouvelle Héloïse; her fancy was fired by its glowing pictures of mutual love and sacrifice; unconsciously she was looking for a Saint-Prieux as well as a philosopher, and D. L. B., with his literary taste and knowledge, and his evident admiration of and sympathy with her, filled the rôle fairly well. The man who sorrows with a woman is far more dangerous than he who laughs with her. Manon was evidently disposed to play Julie, but a Julie who was strong and pure. She who had avoided reading tragedy because its fictitious woes affected her too deeply, and disturbed the philosophic calm she sought, who had found in the study of geometry and physics fetters for a roving fancy which strained towards the blue country of romance and sentiment, she at last let herself go—on paper, and to Sophie. "Never was such prompt disemburdening." She was so proud of her emotions, so convinced of their purity and elevation, that she delighted in indulging and describing them, and she unhesitatingly ascribes to D. L. B. all her own delicacy and disinterestedness. Crystallization had been almost instantaneous; crystallization, as Stendhal called it, and no one has invented a happier term for that mysterious operation by which the imagination, stimulated by love, transforms the ordinary mortal into a hero or a genius as the dead bough dropped

into the alum-mines at Salzburg is changed to a fairy-wand of brilliants.

Meanwhile La Blancherie, who though not a withered branch was a forced fruit of the tree of knowledge, called again and again, bringing books to lend Manon. Papa Phlipon, who was not deceived by this innocent and venerable subterfuge, finally returned the last loan himself, dryly remarking that his daughter already had books enough to occupy and amuse her. D. L. B., however, only appeared flattered by this visit, and soon returned it. Papa, whose sole idea of his duty to his child was to mount guard over her, again stated his objections to Pahin's assiduity, and his intention to ask him to discontinue his calls, Manon assenting with apparent docility and inward despair. Mignonne, the lively little maid, who adored her mistress, and consequently loved every one who admired her, suggested in true soubrette fashion that she should soften the blow to D. L. B.

"When I see him out, mademoiselle, I will warn him to come less often." Mademoiselle was but too pleased with this gentle envoy. But unfortunately it is only in comedies that the maid can quite successfully double the mistress's rôle. Mignonne bungled her message and told D. L. B. that it was *mademoiselle* herself who begged him to cease visiting her. At which D. L. B., "pale as death," promised to respect her wishes. Of course Manon had counted on Mignonne's giving this advice as coming from herself (Mignonne) spontaneously. Alas, for the indirect method! Manon went supperless to her room and poured out her lamentations to the receptive Sophie (November 18, 1775).

"My dear, you cannot imagine how much I have suffered since this accursed instant. What will he think of me? It is despairing to think of! How far beneath the rectitude we both profess and the delicacy which has won his esteem is this act of mine, having him spoken to secretly by a servant! But he will see the motive that made me act; this motive will serve as my excuse. He will understand that my love tried to preserve for him the right to continue to come here by warning him to come seldom. . . . Perhaps he will think that I am playing with him—but no, I am too well known to him for him to be so atrociously unjust to me; his heart answers to him for mine. Meantime I have sent him away. . . . He knows that my father does not look kindly upon him, and it is through me that he learns it. He will come back perhaps, but trembling and disconcerted, instead of which he enjoyed such a sweet confidence. This confidence was noble, it was founded on the purity of our sentiments. Never have we said that we loved each other, but our eyes have told each other so a thousand times in the presence of my father, in that expressive language which we deny ourselves when we are alone. Perhaps the warning he has received has dangerously affected his health; he had begun to improve since his return to Paris. . . . I am wounding a heart whose happiness I would buy at the price of my own. If my imprudent step cures him of his love I shall only have to weep for myself; he will be tranquil. . . . Was I not forced to warn him? My father would have soon obliged him to discontinue his visits by his manner of receiving them. Such an order coming

from any one but myself would have been too painful for him. Seeing him only occasionally my father will see him willingly; he is really fond of him after all. . . . He lacks only a fortune. O, Heavens! How I suffer. Why should I fear to let my father suspect the existence of a sentiment that I confess without blushing to God." Manon desires to write to D. L. B. to explain the hard necessity she is under, to let him know that it is her father, not herself, who finds his visits importunate. "A thousand times I was ready to take my pen, a thousand times I hesitated. I was not restrained by the fear that prudence suggests under such circumstances; I have confidence in him, a confidence which I believe his principles justify, and I am proud of his virtues, but *I respected my image in his heart.* I feared to take from it something of its noble beauty. My first step can be in some sense reconciled with my duty, since it sends D. L. B. away from me, but he might disapprove of my action in writing to him. . . . I count on time, on time that devours all things; it alone can perhaps restore to me the calmness that I have lost. . . . Adieu, then, my friend, my refuge and my stay, adieu."

It is only in the springtime of life that one is happy enough to be so unhappy. Three weeks later Manon writes (December 5, 1775): "The violent emotion that I described to you has gradually calmed down; this benefit is the result of the step that caused it. I have gathered the fruit of that cruel order that made me shed so many tears. But if tranquillity has returned to me, my love has not left me, only this sentiment has become so *naturalized* in my heart that it

causes no more trouble there than does filial love; it is a deep river that has hollowed out its bed and flows silently. I am happy and I love; I unite these two opposed feelings with an ease which I could not imagine myself possessing. Submitting to the laws of a necessity which parts us, I find that it does not separate us, and that is enough. 'He loves me,' I say to myself, 'he is working to deserve me.' We seek reciprocally to please each other by becoming better, and in this sweet emulation our virtues thrive and hope remains with us. If he finds a good act to perform, I am sure that he brings to the doing of it more ardor in thinking that it is the sweetest and the only homage he can offer me. On my side I find my being doubled. If it becomes necessary to make any sacrifices of any kind, I shall have more strength than ever. I am more severe to myself and I should forgive myself less easily for the slightest weakness; it seems as though there would be another witness to it, and added reproaches for it. I am no longer anxious, nor agitated, as you feared I would be; inquietude and remorse are strangers to me. I enjoy the advantage of a *cœur fixé*. I am more gay and more free in society. I seek nothing there. I know that after the first shock D. L. B. is himself again and certainly acts as I do. I judge him by my heart; nothing resembles him more. We do not see each other, but we know that we love each other without ever having told each other so."

Meanwhile the evicted lover had given no sign. He was evidently pursuing his career of virtue and self-sacrifice in silence. Manon took a good deal for granted; the crystals were forming fast on the bough.

Foolish M. Phlipon! Would you teach a generous and imaginative young enthusiast to love, separate her from the man she fancies. Seen too near, he would himself often disenchant her. The mediocre lover has a permanent rival in the ideal which every high-minded girl carries in her heart, and which is at once a touchstone and a talisman. In D. L. B.'s case, absence, pity, loneliness, and imagination, which in Manon always masked her preferences as admirations, were at work, transforming an able but rather flighty young opportunist into a moral hero, and a lofty-souled lover.

But Manon was not only imaginative and sentimental, she was intelligent, and she found in her mind a corrective and a cure for the warmth of her imagination and her lack of social experience. *If* she had not been in an unwonted melting mood when D. L. B. returned, *if* he had not brought with him the tender souvenir of the mother who had known and liked him, *if* M. Phlipon had not frowned upon him, and *if* she had seen him more often, Manon's *coup de foudre* would have been but a slight shock, and she would have missed a valuable emotional experience. As it was, with all the elements of a romance, the cruel father, the complaisant maid, the indigent, unselfish, and chivalrous lover, how could a bereaved and lonely girl resist the situation? She lent herself to it with hearty good-will; she took D. L. B. on faith, and his virtues for granted, as trustingly as any little milliner in her quarter would have done, who had never disciplined her mind with algebra, or skipped the love-scenes in tragedies.

The original dry stick had utterly disappeared under a gleaming, dazzling mass of crystals. She made little daily mental offerings to D. L. B.'s enshrined image, as her dear Saint Francis de Sales had recommended to the devout lover of God. She gathered spiritual nosegays for him of sweet thoughts and aspirations. She bade Sophie keep her letters, so that one day, perhaps (oh, transport!), they might read them together; Manon's charmed fancy could picture no closer intimacy of the heart. She had the advantage of organizing and presenting and managing her drama of sentiment quite alone, entirely to her taste, and of speaking both parts in the love-dialogue. She felt and wrote for D. L. B., and supplied him with lofty aims and tender thoughts. The real D. L. B. had obeyed her literally, and was making his visits rare, indeed; so Manon had a freer stage for manœuvring her own D. L. B.—a kind of Grandison-Cato, brain-born, and fancy-nourished, undisturbed by the claims and contradictions of an insistent, human, masculine personality, which would have fitted very ill into the heroic part provided for him.

There were times, however, when her affection waned a little even for this segment of perfection. Always frank to excess, she confesses as much to Sophie. "When I am fairly busy with science or study, good-by to love; my cheerfulness, my strength, my activity return to me, but a little letting myself go—if a certain visit—my heart goes pitapat, and my imagination torments me. When I am on philosophical heights, I find D. L. B. rather small, but turn the glass the other way, and I am mad again." Still she

had intervals of lucidity in which to read the Abbé Raynal and to write long extracts from an excellent *compte rendu* of his Histoire Philosophique (the *livre de chevet* of Charlotte Corday), in which she notes "*Ce livre est propre à hâter la révolution qui s'opère dans les esprits*" (a good prophecy before the event), to give a little dinner and to make verses with Le Sage. Then after nearly a month D. L. B. reappeared, and *adieu raison—vive la folie!* D. L. B. was pale, thinner, more wan than before—he could not sleep, could not regain his health. Anxiety, grief, and emotion were wearing on him; he was sadly changed, and Manon's tumultuous heart told her why. For before he received that fatal order from stupid Mignonne, he was improving—was almost himself again, and now he might be going to die. What could be done? Tiresome Cousin Trude was calling at the same time, and a comforting word in private to D. L. B. was out of the question. The formal visit was soon interrupted by the return of M. Phlipon. D. L. B. rose, saluted him, and took leave, broken-hearted. Only Manon understood the cause of his sadness, and she was obliged to appear gay. "He does not know what he makes me feel," she wails to Sophie this same afternoon; "my apparent serenity doubles his tortures. . . . A single word from my lips can call him back to life, to health. I believe it, I feel it, and why should I not speak? He keeps silence, and in doing so only interests me the more, because in acting thus he shows himself true to his principles, and ever worthy of my esteem."

Manon, all her scruples of delicacy, all her rigid

maiden pride swept away by a rising flood of tenderness, writes to D. L. B. She has ceased to care about any possible tarnishing of that immensely proper image of herself in his breast, and is possessed by one intolerable conviction: that the man she loves is suffering, and that she is the cause of his pain; a conviction that had led generous natures into far greater folly than Manon's innocent imprudence. This letter, of which no copy remains, was to assure D. L. B. of her eternal friendship and unalterable respect, and to explain that it is papa, and not herself, who desires him to *space* his visits. Sophie is besought to receive this letter, to read it, judge of it, and if she considers it *convenable*, to send it to La Blancherie. In any case she is not to burn it. *He* will see it later, perhaps! "*O, Sophie, Sophie, mon amie! sans toi je suis perdue; je suis dans la crise la plus violente; dans le combat le plus cruel avec moi-même; je n'ai de force que pour me jeter dans les bras de l'amitié. O, Dieu! que je souffre!*"

The arms of friendship were evidently open, the eyes of friendship read the explanatory letter, judged it *convenable*, and the hand of friendship posted it to La Blancherie. Peace once more folded her dove's wings and made her nest in Manon's breast, for a week later (January 23, 1776) she writes to Sophie that she has again recovered her calmness, and though there is a certain *greffier de bâtiments*, who is paying his court through Sister Sainte Agathe, she, Manon, considers herself bound to D. L. B.; her reason is a pretty bit of heart-casuistry: "*Car lorsqu'on laisse voir à un homme qu'on l'aime, on a beau lui montrer*

une vertu capable de dompter le sentiment, il se repose toujours sur la recommandation secrète du cœur: tout en croyant à l'héroïsme il espère en la nature. Me livrer à un autre serait donc trahir un espoir que j'aurais donné moi-même."

This conclusion established, Manon is placidly happy in spite of the unwelcome suit of not only the *greffier* but a protégé of Abbé Legrand, whose quiet persistency causes some anxiety. She is occupied, too, in theological discussions with Sophie, discussions entirely free from theological rancor, in which she defines and justifies her own beliefs. She reads Homer (in translation, of course), and is enchanted. She throws herself "up to the collar" into the study of the antique poets.

Still D. L. B. is always in the foreground of her views of life and conduct. She sends his book and her own criticism of it to Sophie, and his presence at the memorial mass for her mother disturbs her tranquillity. D. L. B. absent is a source of strength and consolation, a kind of tutelary genius, but actually seen and heard he troubles the pure fountain of her fancy and dims the noble image mirrored there; it is almost obliterated when one day, walking with Mademoiselle Hangard in the Luxembourg garden, she meets him with a feather in his hat! He, the Spartan, the philosophical, the lover of the simple life, tricked out with a macaroni plume like a frivolous follower of Richelieu, or a foppish imitator of De Tilly! Manon cannot reconcile the presence of this futile ornament with her idea of D. L. B., and, to excuse her preoccupation with an apparent trifle, notes how the smallest details acquire

importance when they pertain to a beloved object, and appear to be betrayals of character.

While she was tormented with her first doubts of D. L. B.'s impeccability, Mademoiselle Hangard gave another turn to the screw by remarking that La Blancherie had been forbidden a friend's house because he boasted that he was about to marry one of the daughters, and that as he was constantly offering his empty hand to rich young ladies he was known as the lover of the eleven thousand virgins!

Was there ever a ruder awakening from a dream! Manon gasped, blushed, doubted, and then began to reason over her infatuation. Even making allowances for prejudice and exaggeration, D. L. B. in the light of these discoveries, instead of the devoted and disinterested paragon she had fancied him, seemed but a fortune-hunter who had sought her because she was an only daughter, and presumably the heiress of her family. And she had admired him, believed in him, and had written him an enthusiastic, almost tender, letter that was an indirect avowal of affection! Manon, when her first burning sense of maidenly shame cooled, tried to be just to D. L. B., though she was more vexed with him than with herself, which was hardly fair. She admitted that she had considered him more estimable than he really was, that a preconceived idea confuses one's impressions of realities, and that he may have owed most of his good qualities to her idealization of him; in a word, she began to strip the crystals off the bough. It is always a sad process, the eviction of a bankrupt tenant from a young heart, and for several days Manon was really ill. Then she

sought comfort in the thought that she would belong only to some one who really was what she had believed La Blancherie to be, and D. L. B. would always possess the advantage of having first resembled her ideal, which was more subtle than tender. "I hope that he will prove to be what I thought he was, but I have no longer the invincible belief that was so sweet. My reason profits by the suffering of my heart, and the worship of Minerva is no longer interrupted by that of loving hope. D. L. B. has become matter for grave reflection as well as tender sentiments." (June 25, 1776.) Manon took her bitter drug without grimacing—at least in public—and the bitterness seems to have soon been modified by the sweets of philosophy. "I have beaten down my hopes. I have used to cure the wound in my heart all the means that a healthy mind can furnish. I am at present convalescing happily." "Oh! D. L. B.," she writes, after telling Sophie of the refusal of a new offer, "it is not to thee that I devote myself, but to the prototype, to the model which I thought thou resembledst. I deceived myself, and I mourn my error more for thee than for myself. *I* still possess my object, but *thou* art nothing." Then she adds, with that irrepressible frankness that always ballasts her flights to the empyrean of sentiment: "*J'ai pourtant bien de la peine à le croire.*" *Bien de la peine?* At times, perhaps; for it is difficult to dislodge an illusion even when pride lends a hand to the process, and if the wound in her heart was healing fast her self-love was still bleeding, and slow of cure. Perhaps Sophie was not surprised when she received an agitated letter from Manon announcing that D.

L. B. had sought and obtained an interview and was coming to explain himself!

He came (December 21, 1776), and Manon's inward perturbation was manifested only by an access of dignity. To D. L. B.'s protestations of gratitude for this favor she answered coldly that she had, impelled by feeling, written him a letter that expressed the sentiments she then felt, and of which she was not ashamed; "one may weep over one's *mistakes*, but to deceive oneself is not a crime. What do you wish of me?" He replied, chilled by her frigid attitude, that he had long desired to express his gratitude for her letter and the high esteem it had inspired in him, but he had been prevented first by her own commands, and then by his illness, his failure to establish himself, the indifference of his mother towards him, and checks and disappointments of all kinds.

To these confidences Manon listened judicially, leaning back in her *bergère*, her cheek resting on her hand. When the list of misfortunes was complete, she answered icily that really all this was "a useless side-issue."

D. L. B. was inexperienced enough in the ways of women to be disconcerted instead of encouraged by her elaborate coldness. He persisted in his explanations, however, and begged her to define what she meant by *mistakes*. She returned, always in the same detached tone, that some special remarks had caused her to reflect on the mistakes one can make in judging by appearances, and that she had profited by them, while feeling at the same time all the mortification they caused. Expressions of astonishment and regret

on the part of D. L. B. were immediately followed by a well-pleaded justification. Manon then confessed with her usual *sans gêne*, that after having distinguished him from most young men by placing him far *above* them, she thought herself obliged to class him *with* them.

D. L. B. very naturally grew warm, saying that she had only heard one side, and therefore should not judge him. This gave her an opportunity, which she was ungenerous enough to use, to freeze the current of his awakening geniality by congratulating him on remaining worthy of her esteem, an esteem now quite cleared of the vapors of enthusiasm. This barbed remark added a new smart to his various disappointments: in his career at court, and in literature, for his book had not proved successful, and perhaps precipitated his resolution to turn his back on the world and bury himself in the country.

They discussed this and kindred subjects for some four hours. Manon, thawed by his evident distress, endeavored to console him by the heart-warming assurance that as long as he was faithful to his principles she should never consider him unhappy, and that to deserve one's own self-respect was the greatest of blessings, and an equivalent for the loss of everything else. Perhaps La Blancherie found her confidences in regard to her own situation more comforting than these gelid maxims. Manon confessed that fortune had deserted her also; that she should have to depend upon herself; that she was seeking the means of living in liberty; that under certain circumstances she *might* sacrifice this coveted liberty, but that she would have to re-

spect a man much more than herself in order to be willing to owe him everything. La Blancherie, more encouraged by her admissions than dashed by her reflections, begged for a correspondence, the permission to see her, or at least to send her news of him, to which she opposed a resolute refusal.

Disappointed in these demands, D. L. B., ever fertile in projects, proposed that Manon should write some articles for a journal that he hoped to publish (presumably before his renunciation of the world). This paper, an imitation of the English *Spectator*, was to be devoted to essays in the form of letters, on literature, criticism, manners, and morals. Manon proved as reluctant to write letters for his journal as she was to correspond with D. L. B. in a private capacity. For the moment she was out of love with letters, though I do not believe her refusal to collaborate with D. L. B. was as high and stately as she represents it in her Mémoires. The letter written to her other self, Sophie, in which she sets down this interview, immediately after it happened, is much kinder and more natural in tone than the abstract of it she wrote years afterwards when the frivolity and restlessness of D. L. B. had been amply proved.

The long tête-à-tête was finally interrupted by the visit of jealous Cousin Trude, and Manon, the austere and frank, let him in through one door while the *amoureux transi* disappeared through the other. "I put on a roguish air to cover my desire to laugh at the little trick which I did fairly well; my poor cousin thought it was in his honor, and was overjoyed. In truth, I feel, through the uneasiness that the least con-

cealment gives me, how ill my directness would agree with an intrigue, no matter how creditable it was (if in any case there are creditable ones), but at the same time I acknowledge that the cunning of women is very apt at carrying them off."

Thus Manon's tragedy of disappointed affection ended with a touch of farce. "The mask, or rather my veil, has fallen . . . admiration is silent, illusion is destroyed, in fine, love exists no more." She is entirely free from self-reproach, and manages to extract honey from what to most women would be a bundle of very bitter herbs. She magnanimously forgives D. L. B. in her thoughts for not being what she imagined he was, but in the flesh she punishes him for falling short of her ideal of him. Once thoroughly disillusioned, she is clear-sighted and just in regard to him, but too self-complacent in judging her own attitude. She flatters herself, perhaps, in believing that "her image graven in his memory will often serve as an object for comparisons by which it will lose nothing; that as long as he preserves the taste for fine and good things he will be obliged to associate them with her in his mind, and herein will be her triumph and her pride"; *ergo* she has only gained in this first skirmish of the heart. She has made a mistake, she has deceived herself, but her self-deception has been a stimulus to acts of kindness, and to sweet and elevated thought. She has fashioned an idol for herself, but has worshipped with a blameless heart and pure sacrifices. With the same philosophic resignation with which she renounced her faith when it proved rebellious to the dictates of reason, as soon as the rain-

bow mist of illusion melted away she tumbled down her poor pinchbeck god from his altar.

So ended the maiden adventure of Manon's heart, its first quest for the "inexpressive He." Poor La Blancherie was but the peg on which she hung a robe of golden and purple tissue, fancy spun, and she was too sane-minded, too healthy-hearted, above all too clear-eyed, not to recognize and confess her error. But recognition and confession do not forestall repetition. Manon all her life was too apt to disguise her preferences as admirations. They were, however, never again as unjustifiable as her idealization of La Blancherie.

Mammès Claude Pahin de la Blancherie was a type of the notionologue of his century, who was to find a freer scope for his mental uneasiness during the Revolution. There were many individuals of his genus, professional men with refined and expensive tastes and small means, educated beyond their capacity, and consequently discontented with the only positions they were able to fill.

In the conservative past, except in the privileged classes, much was required for the building of a career. The individual was born predestined to a certain place, to a distinct future; the boundary-lines of accomplishment were fixed, the course of the life race measured and marked. There were no free passes to mental or social distinction. The world's fair was open to few. Life was coherent, its long perspective ordered like a formal garden, prizes were distributed according to certain regulations, and the places at the world's banquet were given by rule. If men were more content than now in the station of life to which it had

pleased God to call them, discontent had to be associated with unusual capacity to change that station. Mere pretensions received less consideration than they do in our optimistic society. A desire to fly the track was not in itself considered an evidence of superiority. The ideal of the mid-eighteenth century was to subdue circumstances rather than to defy them, and the barriers by which society was divided and defended were more often overleaped by the able than undermined by the envious, or shattered by the merely rebellious. The bloody but unbowed pate was less reverenced than the head unbruised by butting against conventions, willing to bend to established usage and reserve its powers for more subtle struggles. Men of unusual ability accepted the conditions of life as a working hypothesis and wasted little force in opposing them. The social reformer, therefore, the "come-outer," was not the commonplace individual that he has since become, and had not yet been classified and labelled. Therefore a young, briefless lawyer, with a fair education, a stock of notions, and a facility in writing, was a more striking figure in Manon's formal social landscape than he would have been a decade or two later.

Pahin de la Blancherie was not the literary adventurer he has been called. It would be more just to describe him as a journalist without a job. His was the sensational modern-newspaper man's temperament: audacious, sensational, superficial, possessed of literary talent and a passion for novelties, wanting in taste, a stranger to delicacy. An unabashed opportunist, he was born too soon in a world too young.

His first book, a novel with a purpose, was a close

study of the errors and vices of very young men, and of their lamentable results. It was written "to enlighten and assist parents in the education of their sons," a laudable intention not too diffidently expressed by the youthful author.

Only the aloofness of a colorless, scientific style could invest so repulsive a subject with dignity. Nothing in La Blancherie's handling of his impossible theme justifies him in touching it at all. He was, nevertheless, in his way an innovator and a forerunner of the modern school of realistic fiction which occupies itself with questions economic and social, with medical and pathological studies, as often as with the mysteries of the heart or the problems of the mind. But La Blancherie was too early a laborer in this field of naturalistic fiction; his contemporaries, like Manon in her high-minded and penetratingly analyzed criticism of his work, found it lacking in seriousness. La Blancherie was even in his début always sensational. He interspersed his distressing narrative with sentimental appeals and plaintive lamentations, and smothered his grim moral in the flowers of rhetoric. Parents were deaf to his warnings, and apparently refused enlightenment and assistance, for the book fell flat.

His next move was to dub himself general agent for scientific and artistic correspondence, to open a hall in Paris for exhibitions of pictures and lectures on scientific and artistic subjects. In connection with this enterprise De la Blancherie published from 1779 to 1787 a review called News of the Republic of Arts and Letters and a catalogue of French artists. His ventures were fairly successful; Roland went to some

of the lectures and found them well attended and interesting. The news and the catalogue are still helpful to students of the art of the eighteenth century.

In 1788 political affairs absorbed public attention, and La Blancherie's audiences diminished. He abandoned the review, closed his hall, and went to London, where he happened to occupy Newton's old house. Feeling that the great astronomer was not sufficiently honored by his own country, he proposed that in dating all public documents, after the words "year of grace," "and of Newton" should be added. He suggested also that the name of Newton should be given alternately with that of George to the kings of England. Albion was as indifferent to these reforms as the parents of Orleans had been to those contained in La Blancherie's book. Its author drifted about, tirelessly inventive, always busy with some new project. A literary free-lance, he had many adventures, and one most curious experience. He watched the little *bourgeoise* whose hand he had asked become the most powerful woman in France. He saw the girl who had once sent him a tender letter, writing to the King, the people, and the people's leaders, changing the course of European events, and sending an ultimatum to the prince bishop of Rome. After that astounding transformation all the swift changes of rôles, all the history that he saw made afterwards, for he lived until 1811, must have seemed usual and expected.

CHAPTER VI

FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

MANON'S views of people who made no romantic appeal to her were free from any tinge of rose-color. In spite of her retirement she had occasional glimpses of artistic and literary circles, of the court and of the *petite noblesse*. Mingled with her accounts of walks and studies, and the little, carefully finished, Dutch pictures of homely life, are cleanly outlined silhouettes of the actors in such scenes of the social comedy as her half-bourgeois, half-artistic environment afforded her. She had always been easily first in her small world; she now occasionally entered spheres in which she did not count at all—a salutary, perhaps, if not a delectable experience. She was shocked and mortified that the Abbé Bimont's housekeeper, "a big, lean, yellow hackney, harsh-voiced, proud of her nobility, boring everybody with her domestic talents, and her parchments," who could not write a decently spelled letter, and whose speech defied grammar, should be treated with consideration everywhere on account of her ancestry. Manon drew large conclusions from the respect shown to an ignorant old maid's genealogical tree, and decided "that the world was very unjust, and social institutions very absurd."

Sophie's relatives in Paris, who were of the *petite noblesse*, did little to render their order more respect-

worthy. These were an ignorant and tyrannical old uncle, whom Manon nicknamed "The Commandant," and the demoiselles de Lamotte, who prided themselves greatly on their birth, and reverently preserved, while not daring to use it, their mother's *sac*. This relic was a bag, embroidered with the family arms, used to hold books of devotion, and which it was the privilege of the nobility to carry, or have carried by page or lackey, to church. The de Lamottes' intimate circle was composed of various specimens of the ancient régime, withering away in a closed retort of bigotry and prejudice, carefully guarded by all sorts of mental screens from the live issues and thought-currents of their time. There was M. de Vouglans, a learned but fanatical magistrate, who had tried to refute Beccaria in a sanguinary defense of legal torture. There was the Chevalier des Salles, who had served and been seriously wounded in Louisiana—"more gravely wounded in the service of Venus than that of Mars," Manon mischievously remarks to Sophie—and who was affronting further dangers by playing cards and lover at once with the coquettish old Marquise de Caillavelle.

Letters were represented by the de Lamottes' confessor, who wrote verses comparing Voltaire to Satan, and *haute finance* by a Cannet millionaire, who said regretfully, after calculating the royalties on a successful play: "Why did not my father have me taught to write tragedies? I could have done them on Sundays." These people, keenly conscious of their small quantum of noble blood, and of Manon's lack of it, gave her a kind of brevet rank for Sophie's sake, and also because her musical accomplishments, her

supposed expectations, and her winning presence added a warm touch of life to their genteel petrifaction. But their condescension did little to increase the young republican's esteem for them or their order. She could not help making comparisons. They were so decidedly inferior in manners and culture to the painters and sculptors who came to her father's house; "that an ignorant millionaire or an impertinent officer could enjoy privileges refused to real merit and talent" (to a Falconet, for instance) appeared to her as comical as it was unjust.

Further experiences confirmed this growing conviction of the absurdity of social conventions. Grandmama Phlipon's sister had married a certain M. Besnard, an *intendant* of the *fermier général* Haudry. This was considered a *mésalliance* by bonne-maman, whose family pride, her granddaughter remarks, was "*déplacé*." M. Besnard proved to be the most tender and devoted of husbands. He and his wife were still living when Madame Roland wrote her Memoirs, and she always mentions them with affection. "I am proud of belonging to them, and with their character and virtues I should be so even if M. Besnard had been a footman." Haudry, the employer of M. Besnard, was a type of the financier who, as Montesquieu says, sustains the state as *la corde soutient le pendu*. A shrewd, close-fisted peasant, he had found his way to Paris, where he became one of those *fermiers généraux* who precipitated the ruin of France. He made an immense fortune at the expense of the public, chose husbands for his granddaughters among the nobility, and left his son the means of playing

the gentleman. This son, having purchased the domain of Soucy, promptly dubbed himself Haudry *de* Soucy, and assumed a patrician manner of living. Among his possessions was also the old château of Fontenay, where the Besnards spent the summer, and where their grandniece made a yearly visit. Every Sunday there was a ball on the lawns, a kind of decorous saturnalia where financiers, nobles, and peasants danced together, and Lubin and Annette were as welcome as Madame la Présidente or Monsieur le Baron. Near Fontenay was the cottage of Manon's nurse, and Fontenay itself was in the midst of "charming woods, beautiful meadows, and cool valleys."

A visit to the Haudry family was a necessary courtesy, which was promptly returned. An invitation to dinner at Soucy followed and was accepted by Madame Besnard. To Manon's surprise it was not with their hostess, but at the *second* table with monsieur's gentlemen and madame's ladies-in-waiting, in a word *à l'office*, that they dined. The girl's sense of humor salved her momentary mortification. Here was a novel vista of social life to be observed and noted. "It was a new spectacle for me, that of these second-class deities. I never imagined how ladies' maids could play at being grand folk. They were ready to receive us, and really made good understudies; dress, carriage, little airs, nothing was forgotten. The fresh spoils of their mistresses lent to their toilets a richness that a self-respecting *bourgeoisie* denied itself. The caricature of *bon ton* was added to a kind of elegance as far removed from the sobriety of the *bourgeois* as it was from the good taste of the artist. Nevertheless,

the general tone of the chat would have deceived country folk. It was worse with the men. The sword of monsieur the head butler, the attentions of monsieur the cook, the brilliant liveries of the footmen, could not redeem the awkwardness of their manners, their stilted speech, when they wished to appear distinguished, or the commonness of their language, when they ceased to watch themselves. The conversation was filled with marquises, counts, and financiers, whose titles, fortunes, and marriages appeared to be the grandeur, the riches, and the business of those who talked of them. The superfluities of the first table overflowed on to this second one with an order, a neatness, that preserved their pristine appearance, and an abundance, which would be passed on to the third table, that of the servants, for those who sat at the second were styled officers. Gaming followed the meal, with high stakes, the ordinary amusement of these ladies, who played every day. A new world was opened to me, in which I found an imitation of the prejudices, the vices, or the follies of a world that appeared a little better but was hardly worth more."

A visit to Versailles to see the court served to confirm these impressions (September, 1774). The Abbé Bimont, the noble Mademoiselle d'Hannaches, Manon, and her mother occupied a little apartment lent them by one of Marie Antoinette's ladies-in-waiting. Thanks to her protection and the persistence of Mademoiselle d'Hannaches, they "saw everything," all the endless and empty ceremonies of the court.

For a week they watched the large and small dinners of the royal family, the masses in the chapel, the gam-

ing, the promenades, all the complicated and wearisome formalities of palace life. It was not surprising that Manon preferred to look at the statues in the gardens rather than the people in the château. She longed to leave the three stuffy, dark rooms in the attic where they were lodged, next to the Archbishop of Paris, who occupied an equally small and airless apartment, and from whom they were separated by so thin a partition that they could not speak without being overheard. A glance at the old plans of the palace of Versailles proves in what evil-smelling rookeries and rat-holes dukes and prelates were pleased to lodge, "*pour être plus a portée de ramper au lever des Majestés*," wrote the Spartan Manon. She was sensitive to the picturesqueness of ceremonious observances, but their absurdity and the reverence and awe with which they surrounded, like a kind of special atmosphere, a group of individuals already too powerful and in no way remarkable in themselves aroused her indignation.

"Why, what have these people done to you?" said her mother, who accepted the adoration of royalty as she did rheumatism or the salt tax, without reasoning or rebellion. "They have made me feel injustice and contemplate absurdity," retorted the admirer of antique republics. "I sighed while thinking of Athens, where I could have admired the fine arts without being wounded by the sight of despotism; in spirit I wandered through Greece, I was a spectator of the Olympian games, and I was annoyed that I was a Frenchwoman. Thus, impressed with all that the happy days of republics offered me, I passed over lightly the storms

with which they were agitated. I forgot the death of Socrates, the exile of Aristides, the condemnation of Phocion. I did not know that Heaven reserved me to be a witness of errors like those of which they were the victims."

Was Manon in 1774 already so ardent a republican? Did she not in her Memoirs record the sentiments of the woman rather than those of the girl nineteen years younger? It is easy to test the accuracy of her memory of that Versailles visit, for she wrote an account of it to Sophie on her return to Paris (October 4, 1774).

". . . I was much amused during my sojourn at Versailles. It was a journey undertaken for pleasure and curiosity, and for my part I found what I sought. . . . With a little imagination and taste it is impossible to see masterpieces of art with indifference, and if one is concerned with the general welfare, one is necessarily interested in the people who have so much influence on it. . . . But let us go back to Versailles. I cannot tell you how much what I observed there has made me prize my own situation, and bless Heaven that I was born to an obscure position. You will believe, perhaps, that this sentiment is founded on the slight value which I attach to opinion, and on the reality of the penalties of greatness. Not at all. It is founded on the knowledge which I have of my own character, which would be most harmful to myself and to the state were I placed at a certain distance from the throne, for I should be greatly shocked at the extreme inequality caused by rank between several millions of men and a single individual of the same kind. In my position I love the King because I hardly

feel my dependence on him. If I were too near him I should hate his grandeur. Such a disposition is not desirable in a monarchy; when it is found in a person possessing rank and power it is dangerous. With me it does not matter, for my education has taught me what I owe to the powers that be, and has caused me to respect and cherish through reflection and a sense of duty what I should not naturally have loved. Thus I believe, were it required of me, I could serve my King as ardently as the most zealous of Frenchmen, though I have not the blind partiality for his master with which he is born. A good king seems to me an almost adorable being. Still, if before coming into the world I had had my choice of a government, I should have chosen a republic. It is true that I should have wished it constituted differently from any in Europe to-day."

These passages in the Memoirs and the letters have been cited at length because bits of them have been often adduced as proof of Manon's early hatred and *envy* of royalty. The enthusiasm of a young creature longing for a more equal distribution of opportunities for human happiness, dreaming of a Utopian republic, was devoid of bitterness and envy. Manon's condemnation of the manifestly unjust and absurd was never unreasonable, though sometimes impatient. Like most educated persons of the Third Estate, she was justly intolerant of privileges that had no reason for being, either in the capacity of the noble or the incapacity of the *bourgeois*. With every thinker she was opposed to the artificial distinctions which consigned the whole middle class to subaltern employments, and

in every career subjected it to the precedence of so-called superiors, who were often its inferiors in ability and achievement. But her iconoclasm was tempered by taste, and she was as ready to smile at the pretensions of a poetaster or the pose of a philosopher as at Mademoiselle d'Hannaches's six centuries of noble blood.

Manon had ample opportunities to discover that snobbishness and adulation flourish as luxuriantly in literary as in aristocratic circles. At the *musicales* of the Abbé Jeauket, who had been court musician at Vienna, and had given lessons to Marie Antoinette, Manon met her first bluestocking. This was Madame de Puisieux, a friend of Diderot, and the writer of Les Caractères, a moral work. An authoress was then something of a rarity, and presumably a person of unusual intelligence and dignity. Manon was shocked and disappointed at Madame de Puisieux's silliness, her childish affectations and coquetries, hardly pardonable in a young person, and curiously out of place in a toothless and bent old lady of over fifty. Manon concluded that the men who ridiculed women who wrote were wrong only in attributing exclusively to them the defects that they shared with them.

Another authoress, whom the girl met at the concerts of Madame de l'Epine, clinched this opinion. The sculptor L'Epine, a pupil of Pigalle, who was an old friend of M. Phlipon, had married an ex-cantatrice in Rome. This lady on her return to Paris gave weekly *musicales*, to which only "*bonne compagnie*" was admitted, and where good music was well played and sung. There Manon and her mother heard several

celebrated *musicanti*, and made some desirable acquaintances, among the "*insolentes baronnes, les jolis abbés, les vieux chevaliers, et les jeunes plumets.*"

Through Madame l'Epine also the Phlipons were bidden to an assembly that met every Wednesday at M. Vasse's apartment, near the barrière du Temple, and was devoted to letters. The kindly cantatrice assured them that the reunions there were "delicious," and persuaded them to accept an invitation. Manon's picture of it suggests one of Ollivier's clear, delicately bright interiors with their minutely drawn, vivid, little figures. "We climbed to the third floor and reached an apartment furnished in the usual way. Straw chairs, arranged in several rows, awaited the audience and were just beginning to be filled. Dirty copper candlesticks with tallow candles lighted this retreat, whose grotesque simplicity did not misrepresent the philosophical austerity and the poverty of a wit. Elegant young women, girls, several dowagers, a lot of little poets, *des curieux et des intrigants*, formed the assembly. The master of the house, seated before a table, opened the proceedings by reading some of his own verses. The subject of them was a pretty little monkey that the old Marquise of Préville always carried in her muff, and which she showed to all the company, for she was present, and hastened to offer the hero of the piece to our eager eyes.

"Imbert [a well-known author] then took the chair. Imbert, poet of the Judgment of Paris, read an agreeable trifle, which was immediately praised to the skies. His reward followed. Mademoiselle de la Cossonnière came after him, and read The Adieu to Colin,

which, if it was not very clever, was certainly very tender. We knew that it was addressed to Imbert, who was on the eve of a journey, and it was smothered with compliments. Imbert recompensed his muse and himself by kissing all the women in the assembly. This gay and lively ceremony, though performed with propriety, did not please my mother at all, and seemed so strange to me that I appeared confused by it. After I do not know how many epigrams and quatrains, a man read some verses in a very declamatory manner in praise of Madame Benoît. She was present, and I must add a word about her to those who have not read her novels.

"Albine was born in Lyons. She married the designer Benoît, went with him to Rome, and became a member of the Arcadian Academy. Just after her widowhood she returned to Paris, and remained there. She made verses and romances, sometimes without writing them, gave card-parties, and visited women of quality, who paid her in money and fine clothes for the pleasure of having a wit at their tables. Madame Benoît had been handsome. The aids of the toilet, and the desire to please, prolonged beyond the age which guarantees success in the endeavor, still obtained her some conquests. The openly voluptuous air of Madame Benoît was new to me. I was not less struck with the poetic incense which was lavished on her, and the expressions, 'virtuous Benoît,' 'chaste Benoît,' repeated several times in these verses, that frequently forced her to raise a modest fan before her eyes. Meantime several men who doubtless found these eulogies very appropriate applauded raptur-

ously." Manon decided after these disillusioning experiences that she would eat her fingers rather than become an authoress, and that literature offered women even more opportunities of becoming ridiculous than were afforded by the fine arts.

Pleasanter than watching these unsuccessful escalades of Parnassus were Manon's frequent visits to the "dear little Uncle" Bimont, who had become canon of the Sainte Chapelle at Vincennes. His house there was pretty, the walks in the forest charming, and the society, noble, ecclesiastical, and military, less stiff and formal than either in Paris or the provinces.

The château of Vincennes, like the palace of Hampton Court, was inhabited by royal pensioners, many invalided officers and their families, and a chapter of ecclesiastics. Among them were several whose names fill a few lines on the pages of history: the Lieutenant du Roi, Rougemont, pimply and insolent, as Mirabeau, his prisoner, described him; the learned and toothless but still skittish Madame de Puisieux; Moreau de la Grave, the royal censor, of the type that condemned the encyclopédie and approved Crébillon's novels, and the nimble-minded Caraccioli, better known to letters as Ganganelli.

The château was a little cosmos and lodged six hundred persons, without counting the prisoners in the dungeon. The Abbé Bimont was received everywhere, but made no visits, and entertained but few people. There were balls, however, and races, inaugurated and patronized by the King's sporting brother, D'Artois, illuminations and fireworks, ever dear to the Gallic eye, and informal receptions every fine evening in the

pavilion of the park. Manon forgot her books and enjoyed everything with the zest of girlhood, from the dances and the talks to the visits to the hermits in the woods.

They amused themselves at home, too, for the abbé was as young as his niece. The only serpent in this little Eden was the blue-blooded Mademoiselle d'Hannaches, the abbé's housekeeper. Her irritable temper and tiresome pretensions troubled Manon more than they did her amiable uncle. One day when they were declaiming a most moving scene from one of Voltaire's tragedies, Mademoiselle d'Hannaches, who had been silently spinning, interrupted them with shrill screams to the hens, who, more appreciative than the lady of many quarterings, had assembled to listen. Naturally, such incidents were trying to an idealist. After dinner, when the table was cleared, with muff-boxes for racks, music was made. "While the good Canon Bareux, spectacles on nose, plays the bass viol with shaking bow, I scrape my violin, another canon accompanies us on a squeaking flute, and we have a concert fit to frighten cats. Then I run into the garden, pick a rose or some parsley. I take a turn in the poultry-yard; I amuse myself with the brood hens and the little chicks. I rack my brain for anecdotes and stories to warm up these benumbed imaginations, and to turn the talk away from the chapter, which sends me to sleep sometimes [1776]. . . . At the canon's house I must live like a canoness. There the wine-cellar is better furnished than the library, and more time is spent at table than anywhere else."

Some of her holidays were more eventful. Strict as she was in many things, there was a lurking spirit

of adventure in her. All Manon's world loved disguises and masks, and to put on a maid's or a peasant's costume was often a means of travelling inexpensively and safely. Manon, invited by her cousin Trude to spend the day in Etampes, and wishing to visit the sights (instead of passing the time listening to provincial gossip from her cousin's hostess), dressed as a peasant, mounted a donkey, and successfully played the rôle of country girl all day. She trotted about alone through Etampes, with her arms akimbo, visited everything, from the tanneries to the Calvary where Ravaillac sharpened his knife, dined with the cook, and decided that if she were ever able to travel, it would be dressed as a peasant or a man (June 16, 1778).

Perhaps her pleasantest social relations were with artists, relations singularly free from pretensions or artificiality. The genial freemasonry of the craft made the engraver a welcome visitor at the studios of eminent confrères. Manon's happiest hours with her father were passed in the ateliers of his friends, or at art exhibitions, where she keenly appreciated his technical knowledge of and trained taste in the arts, and his evident pleasure in communicating them to her.

A visit that she made to Greuze's studio is pleasantly reported to Sophie (September 19, 1777). "The subject of his picture is 'The Paternal Curse.' I will not attempt to describe it in detail; it would be too long. . . . One may find fault with M. Greuze for the grayness of his coloring, which I should accuse him of putting in all his pictures if I had not seen on the same day a painting of another style which he showed me with especial kindness. It is a little, naïve,

fresh, charming girl who has just broken her jug. She has it on her arm, near the fountain where the accident has just happened. Her eyes are not too widely opened, her mouth is yet half ajar, she is trying to realize her misfortune, and does not know if she is guilty or not. You cannot imagine anything more piquant or prettier. The only fault that one could justly find with M. Greuze is that he has not made his little one sorry enough to prevent her from returning to the fountain. I told him so, and the pleasantry amused us. He did not criticise Rubens this year, and I was better pleased with him personally. He told me complacently the amiable things the Emperor said to him. 'Have you been in Italy, sir?' 'Certainly, Monsieur le Comte' [Joseph II was travelling incognito as the Count of Falkenstein]; 'I lived there two years.' 'You surely did not find your style there; it belongs to you; you are the poet of your paintings.' This remark was very subtle; it had two meanings. I was naughty enough to underline one of them, answering him in a complimentary way: 'It is true that if anything could add to the expressiveness of your pictures it is your descriptions of them.' The author's self-love served me well. M. Greuze appeared flattered. I stayed three-quarters of an hour. There were but few people there. Only Mignonne was with me. I had him almost to myself. I wished to add to the praises I gave him:

On dit, Greuze, que ton pinceau,
N'est pas celui de la vertu romaine;
Mais il peint la nature humaine:
C'est le plus sublime tableau.

I kept quiet and that was the best thing that I did."

Rousseau was less accessible. He had been for at least a year the god of Manon's idolatry when a friend gave her an opportunity to approach her deity by intrusting her with a commission for Rousseau. Realizing that he would not receive a young girl, for his devotees in Paris had been frightened away from his door by the snappish Cerberus, Thérèse Levasseur, Manon wrote him a long letter in which there was much besides the original errand, announcing that she would call for an answer. She describes her visit in a letter to Sophie:

"I entered a cobbler's alley, the Rue Platrière. I climbed to the second story and knocked at the door. No one could enter a temple more reverently than I did this humble portal. I was agitated, but I felt none of the timidity that I experience in the presence of those petty society people for whom I have no real esteem. I balanced between hope and fear . . . a woman of fifty years of age at least appeared. She wore a round cap, a simple, clean house-gown, and a large apron. She had a harsh, even a rather hard look.

" 'Does M. Rousseau live here, madame?'

" 'Yes, mademoiselle.'

" 'May I speak to him?'

" 'What do you want of him?'

" 'I have come for the answer to a letter I wrote him a few days ago.'

" 'He is not to be spoken to, mademoiselle; but you may say to the person who had you write—for certainly it is not you who wrote a letter like that—'

" 'Excuse me,' I interrupted.

" 'Even the handwriting is a man's—'

" 'Do you want to see me write?' I said, laughing.

"She shook her head, adding: 'All that I can say is, that my husband has given up all these things entirely. He has left everything. He would not ask anything better than to be of service, but he is old enough to rest.'

" 'I know it, but I should have been flattered to receive this answer from his lips. I would have profited eagerly by this opportunity to offer my homage to the man of the whole world that I esteem the most. Receive it, madame.'

"She thanked me, still keeping her hand on the lock, and I went down-stairs with the very slight satisfaction of knowing that he found my letter too well-written to believe it the work of a woman." (February 29, 1776.)

Not long afterwards Rousseau died, and Manon never saw the writer who, after Plutarch, had most powerfully affected her philosophy of life. Rousseau was to her, as to so many of her contemporaries, an initiator. His feverish passion, his sentiment, that so often declined into sentimentality, were the antidotes to the dryness and cynicism that were withering the heart of an overcivilized, artificial society. The glowing eloquence with which in the midst of conventions he advocated a return to nature; his sanctification of love; his tender idealization of the domesticities; his sympathy with childhood; his affection for beauty, music, flowers, the country; his audacious theories of political organization; his novel social system;

above all, his knowledge, intuitive and acquired of the heart, and the irresistible potency of a poignant appeal to it—all these rhapsodies and exhortations, and descriptions, invested with the magic of a style exquisitely simple and beautifully direct, caused not only one revolution but many.

Like most of his readers, Manon was charmed and convinced at once by what Lecky called Rousseau's "wonderful fusion of passion and argument," his pre-eminent trait. His logical faculty, his able defense of his opinions, his vigorous grasp of principles, were those qualities that she was qualified to appreciate. Rousseau's shortcomings and defects were invisible to her. His lack of the justness of mind that underlies authoritative opinions and prepares definite conclusions by previously weighing and appraising values was unperceived by her, captivated by the logic with which he defended his tenets. That he made no original discoveries, that the doctrines of the Social Contract were largely derived from the works of Locke and Sidney, that his political system, when he diverged from these models, was clumsy and complicated, made little or no impression on a girl unfamiliar with questions of practical politics. Nor did they on those older and wiser, who carried Rousseau's reforms and revolts into every department of life.

Women were the most avid recipients of Rousseau's message. His gospel was received by them with an unquestioning consent, a complete adherence, that they had never yielded to the teaching of Voltaire. The reason is easily found. The task of Voltaire was to annihilate the old creed, to demonstrate its incapac-

ity to satisfy the spiritual and mental needs of humanity; the mission of Rousseau was to establish a new faith, to prove the adequacy of natural religion to the ethical and emotional wants of man. It is the nature of creatures feminine to adore the creative rather than the destructive powers. Voltaire, the extirpator of intolerance, was perforce less authoritative to beings who were receptive and assimilative than Rousseau, the apostle of a new worship, the religion of the heart. He who aspires to leadership of popular opinion should be dogmatic. Assertion, not exposition, is his business. He should not content himself with a statement of facts, and then leave his followers to draw their own inferences. With most men outworn formulas are rejected because newer formulas are ready at hand to replace them. "From a board one drives out a nail with another nail," prosaically remarked the poet Cino. Men live by affirmations, not by negations.

Voltaire demonstrated; Rousseau dogmatized. Voltaire, as became the founder of intellectual liberty, presented his case with comment and suggestion, comparison and example, and then left the conclusion to his reader's judgment. Rousseau, a true child of clear-headed, logical, narrow-minded Geneva, began his case by pronouncing a decision, continued his plea with a brilliant defense of his position, and ended with a burst of eloquence, or a touch of sentiment.

Voltaire's appeal was to the mind; Rousseau's to the feelings. It was the absurdity of legal torture, the unreason of religious intolerance, the stupidity of cruelty, that revolted Voltaire. It was not only women who failed to perceive the earnestness under the gibes

of this master of mockery, Voltaire's method of attack on abuses mystified the literal-minded in general. His light lash cut to the bone, but it was wielded with an air of easy trifling, an appearance of detachment, that to the enthusiast seemed lacking in moral seriousness. Manon apparently never included the defender of the Calas and the Sirven among her admirations, though she made many Protestant friends.

The diamond-pointed wit and the satire of Candide left her unmoved. She merely mentions having read it as a child, and does not refer to it again. Children, like simple-minded folk, and cultivated dogs, and all instinctive creatures whose perceptions are unblunted by reasoning and undulled by reflection, are repelled by irony. Sarcasm generally offends, and consequently seldom sways, women. No satirist from Juvenal to our own day has ever been a lady's author. The dicta of the spirit that denies are reluctantly accepted by Eve's daughters. Voltaire, the athlete of intellectual emancipation, the bitter jester, railing against bigotry and cruelty, would never have been revered by them had not the scoffer been doubled by Voltaire the benefactor, the saviour and defender. The charities of the Sage of Ferney softened the ironies of Arouet, the pungent wit.

Manon had read Voltaire's articles in the Encyclopédie side by side with Rousseau's Emile, which she admired temperately and discussed rationally. But with the Héloïse she slipped past the wicket of reason and found herself in an enchanted wood, a realm of demonstrative affections and delicious emotions, where sentiment was lord of life. To feel and to express feel-

ing, these were the first commandments of the new ruler, to return to nature the third. Never was subject more eager to hear, more prompt to obey, than was Manon. She was one of a countless multitude of converts. There can be no clearer evidence of the sustained fervor with which Rousseau's mandates were followed than the transformation of costume, of daily habits, of education, of literary style, of the face of the earth itself which took place, not only in France but in England, Germany, and Italy, at the close of the eighteenth century. Rousseau had made man over in his own image.

Julie, the new Héloïse, does not figure among our "favorite heroines." Her transports and despairs, her sacrifices and scruples, would excite smiles rather than admiration in a society that cherishes detachment as she cultivates expansion, and no doubt Saint-Prieux seems as far away from the sympathies of the twentieth-century lover as is Theagenes or Amadis. But to Manon the exalted and loquacious pair seemed as real, as moving, as were Lancelot and Guinevere to ill-starred Francesca. Rousseau sanctioned Manon's own excess of emotion, her ardors and enthusiasms; he kindled her imagination, which her studies and meditations had held in leash; she confessed as much in after life.

CHAPTER VII

BEREAVEMENT AND NEW FRIENDS

MANON'S mother, her daughter suspected, had prudently kept the Nouvelle Héloïse from the intense and imaginative girl. It was not until after Madame Phlipon's death that the book was brought to Manon by the Abbé Legrand in the hope of rousing her from the lethargy into which she had fallen. Her loss was literally irreparable. Her mother had been ailing for some time, and the doctors had recommended exercise and country air, and a short visit to Meudon seemed to prove as beneficial as it was delightful. The day after their return to town Manon went to visit Sister Agathe at the convent; she left her mother a little tired from her excursion, but apparently well, at three o'clock; at five, on her return, Madame Phlipon was dying. The end came before midnight. A stroke of paralysis, aggravated by an abscess in the head, which had not been suspected by her physicians, was the cause of her death (June 7, 1775).

The shock threw Manon into a nervous fever. For two weeks the kind Besnards, who seemed to find youth and strength to nurse her, feared for her life and her sanity. One fainting-fit followed another, and the relief of weeping was denied her, until a tender letter from Sophie opened the source of her tears. She felt herself an orphan, and her first interview with her father after their bereavement increased her sense of

isolation. M. Phlipon's proffered consolations were of a more practical than sentimental nature. Providence had disposed of everything for the best, he assured Manon. Her mother's work, viz., her child's education, was finished, and if Manon was fated to lose one of her parents, it was fortunate that Heaven had left her the one who would be most useful to her pecuniarily! This eminently sensible consideration literally distracted the bereaved girl. Her father's insensibility pierced her wounded heart anew, and brought on a return of the dangerous swoons and convulsions. She was convinced that she was her mother's unique mourner, and the sorrow that should have gently drawn father and daughter together, completed their estrangement.

Madame Phlipon's death closed the sunny and tranquil period of Manon's youth; with that gentle spirit, its cloudless morning passed away. The girl now inherited her mother's household cares, which she shared with the devoted Mignonne, and the far more difficult task of trying to divert and interest her father, and to keep him by his own fireside. She was lamentably unsuccessful. Piquet was insipid when played for love, conversation flat where there were no ideas and tastes in common, no love of music or of books. After some dutiful endeavors M. Phlipon fled from the dulness of evenings at home to more convivial society. If the story of the Idle Apprentice is a sad one, that of the Idle Master is sadder still. M. Phlipon grew every day more indolent and dissipated; he took a mistress, and he spent more than he earned. Helplessly Manon watched their modest fortune dwindle

away. After her mother's death her own dowry should have been secured to her, but her relatives thought, naturally, that her interests were safe in her father's hands, and also feared to offend him by asking for the customary inventory of property. Manon herself had too much family pride to complain of her father's disorders and extravagance.

Her books and her pen were her consolations. She wrote a number of meditations and descriptions, which she entitled somewhat pompously Œuvres de loisir, et réflexions diverses. She had no other object in writing than to record her thoughts and experiences and to express her emotions; and these essays are in no way remarkable. They are tinged with a mild melancholy, and are generally didactic in tone. They contain touches of grace and feeling; among them is a very tender tribute to Madame Phlipon's memory, and a vivid account of a literary pilgrimage to the Hermitage of Rousseau at Montmorency with M. de Boismorel (October 29, 1775).

This gentleman, whom Manon had not seen since her stay with Bonnemaman on the Ile Saint Louis, came to make his visit of condolence after Madame Phlipon's death (June, 1775). He found the studious child had budded into a pretty and cultivated girl. He soon made a second visit; Manon was absent, but her Œuvres were on the table in her little retreat that M. Phlipon was indiscreet enough to show him. M. de Boismorel begged for a sight of the manuscripts, and *le parent terrible*, who did nothing by halves, promptly lent them to the curious visitor.

The wrath of Manon, sing O Muse, when on her

return she discovered the violation of her sanctuary! "This offense against liberty and propriety," as she termed it, was condoned next day after receiving a well-turned letter from M. de Boismorel, offering her the use of his library and expressing his interest in her work. This was the origin of a long correspondence and a warm friendship; Manon tasted for the first time the pleasure of being appreciated by a man whose judgment she valued.

M. de Boismorel possessed, besides his books and many other desirable things, an estate below Charenton, the Petit Bercy, with a garden running down to the Seine. He often pressed the Phlipons to visit him there, but Manon, remembering his mother's reception of Bonnemaman, long resisted, and only yielded when further refusal would have imperilled her friendship with her dear "Sage," as she called her new friend. It is amusing to compare this interview with the former one. The ladies of the De Boismorel family were in the summer drawing-room when the Phlipons arrived, and the dragon of Manon's memory seemed less formidable in the presence of her amiable and devout daughter-in-law. The mama, who had patronized Madame Phlipon and treated Manon as though she were a muff-monkey or a spaniel, was rather more polite to a tall and dignified young woman:

"'How good-looking your dear daughter is, M. Phlipon! Do you know that my son is enchanted with her? Tell me, mademoiselle, don't you wish to be married?'

"'Others have thought about that for me, madame, but I have not yet reasons to decide me.'

"'You are hard to please, I think. Have you any objections to a man of a mature age?'

"'The knowledge that I should have of the person himself would alone determine my liking, my refusal, or my acceptance.'

"'That kind of marriage has more durability; a young man often slips through your fingers when you believe him most attached to you.'

"'And why, mother,' said M. de Boismorel, who had just come in, 'why should not mademoiselle believe herself able to captivate him utterly?'

"'She is dressed with taste,' observed Madame de Boismorel to her daughter-in-law.

"'Ah! extremely well, and so modestly, too,' she answered, with the suavity which belongs only to the devout, for she was of that class, and the prim little ringlets that shaded an agreeable face which had seen thirty-four summers were the sign of it.

"'How different,' she added, 'from that mass of plumage we see fluttering above empty heads. You don't care for feathers, mademoiselle?'

"'I never wear them, madame, because being the daughter of an artist, and going out on foot, they would seem to announce a position and a fortune which I don't possess.'

"'But would you wear them in another situation?'

"'I don't know. I attach small importance to trifles. Appropriateness is my only rule in such matters, and I take care not to judge a person by my first impressions of her dress.'

"The observation was severe, but I made it so mildly that its edge was dulled.

"'A philosopher!' she exclaimed with a sigh, as if she recognized that I was not of her kind."

How differently would this patronizing kindness have been received by a young person of the middle class across the Channel! How an English Manon would have blushed and simpered and bobbed her thanks for the great lady's condescension! "La, ma'am, thank you kindly—it will be my study to deserve your future commendation," Miss Burney's Evelina would have said shyly, hanging her head in a pretty confusion, far more winning than the cool self-possession of this featherless *philosophe*.

M. de Boismorel's garden and library and the excursions he planned for the Phlipons proved more pleasing than his womankind. His only son, Roberge, an ordinary and eccentric boy of seventeen, often formed one of the *partie carrée*. He had an unpleasant habit of staring at Manon, but she saw more curiosity than friendliness in his looks, and rather resented his attentions. To her he was but one of those many inferior and incapable persons on whom a whimsical social order had bestowed undeserved advantages. She learned later that M. de Boismorel had said to her father: "Ah, if my son were worthy of your daughter, I might appear singular but I would be happy!"

Young De Boismorel was a cross to his cultivated and studious father. He was indolent and pleasure-loving, cared for little except the opera and the Italian comedy and the companionship of his frivolous cousin, De Favières. This youthful magistrate, made a *conseiller de Parlement* at the age of twenty-one, spent his time writing comedies and ariettes, wearing his

robe as though it were a jester's motley. As a counter-attraction to the fascinations of De Favières, and as an incentive to study, M. de Boismorel proposed to Manon that she should gently admonish Roberge! Modestly veiled by anonymity, she might in the form of a letter hold forth to him on the sweets of a useful and innocent life and the joys of work and effort. Ancient precepts that from a father's lips had proved ineffectual might, with a touch of mystery and combined with an appeal to the boy's curiosity, appear less trite and more forceful. It was only in a literary century that such means could be conceived of to counteract a young man's fondness for the stage and the stage-door. We refer, as a matter of course, to the corruption of the eighteenth, but what parent in the twentieth century would count on a prettily written homily to reform a lazy-minded and dissipated young man? Truly those were innocent as well as golden days, when the pen was mighty as the powder-puff.

Manon, pressed into service as a reformer, at first declined, then accepted, and wrote a homily which she despatched to Sophie, who sent it to Roberge from Amiens. This letter is an example of an extinct literary *genre*. Bound to be didactic in tone, it is a terse and clear exposition of Manon's own philosophy of life, a sermon against idleness and selfishness, a eulogy of activity and usefulness. It is so faintly tinged with irony, so deftly sweetened by an appeal to the recipient's self-love, and so stimulating to curiosity, that the boy swallowed the bitter draft as though it had been a sugared beverage. He proudly read it to his friends, who ascribed it to that immoral moralist Laclos, and envied

Roberge his scolding from such a source. So deep was the impression made on his vanity that he actually became industrious and domestic—for a little while.

"Yes, monsieur," the letter commences, "on the banks of the Somme you are known and cherished. In spite of what the good La Fontaine says, I will wager that some of the Abderites admired Democritos, and in this country, sir, our minds are not so befogged by the smoke of peat that we do not recognize and praise the inimitable color, the brilliancy, the lightness of the manners of the capital; above all, of that class of distinguished inhabitants in which you hold so high a rank. One of my fellow citizens [Gresset] celebrated formerly with success the exploits of a famous parrot; there is still among us more than one author fitted to take you for his hero. I, however, shall keep the silence becoming a poor little modern writer, disregarding the indiscreet ardor which in a transport of admiration cries to me *audaces fortuna juvat*, and shall leave to others who are more expert the task of celebrating the gift of being amiable without striving to become so, and the precious art of becoming independent even while daily acquiring new ties. I ask you only what beneficent genius has bestowed on you these rare gifts which make you in my eyes an inexplicable phenomenon. Imbued with old ideas, I followed a toilsome road, your example struck me, I stop and study it. . . .

"I had hardly begun to live when, parched by the thirst for happiness which is common to us all, I sought anxiously everything that I thought could appease it. What pleases at first does not satisfy always; I have

proved that more than once. Alas! why was I not as happy as so many magistrates without business, so many pretty abbés without cares, so many people who do nothing. Perhaps, it is true, habit and custom would have finally given me the right to be useless without remorse, and idle with impunity, but while waiting for this comforting privilege, my fervid imagination created new griefs for me.

"I imagined Minerva appearing to me under the aspect simple and noble at once, that characterizes wisdom; her sage advice still echoes in my ears, the remembrance of it pursues me constantly. Teach me how to forget it, and share with me the importunate obsession. 'You wish to be happy,' said Minerva to me; 'learn then how to be so.'"

Then follows an exposition of Manon's system of moral philosophy, and its practical application to daily life. Setting out with the desire of happiness as the means of gratifying it, she advocates an intelligent self-interest: human solidarity, the unity of society, the non-existence of independent felicity impose on us the obligation of being useful, while study and reflection furnish us the only means of understanding our duties and the strength of mind to perform them.

"'An enlightened reason is the preservative against, or the balm for, misfortune; a full and occupied life is the pivot of pleasures. Even if everything is only a matter of opinion, if existence is but a dream, it does not follow that there are no rules by which we may dream more at our ease, and the sage will always follow them. Let me light in thy heart the divine fire of enthusiasm for the beautiful, the good, and the

true.' With these words Minerva disappeared and left me troubled, moved. I began to follow the path she traced for me, when seeing you nimbly running in the opposite direction, a wish to gallop after you was born in me. I did so, here I am, but let it be to lead you back again.

"It is useless to carry my fiction further; you understand me. I know you well enough to believe that yours is a nature that permits us to hope; I have seen a father who deserves to gather the fruit of his care. The exhortation of a man who will remain unknown to you should not be indifferent to you. Feeling and truth guide my pen, they alone should touch you, as they alone with me replace wit and talent. How flattered I should be, if on finding you what you might be on my return, I should be able to say to myself: 'I have contributed to his happiness, and to that of a worthy family, of which he is the consolation and the hope.' "

M. de Boismorel's kindness supplied Manon not only with such tomes as those of Bayle but also the literary novelties of the moment. By the Sage's invitation she attended a sitting of the Academy, a social as well as a literary event, on Saint Louis's day (August 25, 1775). It was a complicated and lengthy performance, beginning with a mass in the chapel, sung by the stars of the opera. A fashionable preacher pronounced the panegyric on the saintly King, rendered piquant, on this occasion, by an indirect satire of the government and constant references to the new philosophy. In the evening Manon saw, for the first time, some of those writers whose works were

her daily companions. She confesses to disappointment. The audacious D'Alembert was insignificant to look on, and sharp and rasping to hear, and the Abbé Delille read his tuneful verses in an unmusical voice. The annual prize was given to La Harpe, and his essay, L'Eloge de Catinat, has taken a permanent place in French literature. This more than fulfilled the girl's expectations, and she paid it the tribute of tears, tears of enthusiasm, of noble excitement. And to one "born a scribe" a meeting of the Academy was truly a red-letter day. This public homage to literature, this honoring of letters as one of the nation's glories, not only by the intellectual element but by the court, the nobles, the fashionable, and the frivolous, seemed a sanction of her own master-passion, and to link the solitary and obscure student to an illustrious band of coworkers.

Manon's devotion to literature was wholesomely incited by the appreciation and companionship of some new and congenial acquaintances. The "Sage of Bercy" was but the first among a little group of congenial friends that frequented the Phlipon household. Manon's mother lacked the social instinct with which her more expansive and highly vitalized daughter was endowed. Visits from friends outside the family circle had generally been confined to the shop and the studio; they now extended to the *salle*, where there was a shy but cordial hostess, who could listen as well as she could talk, and whose wide reading and alert mind lent a vivid and varied charm to conversation. And the friends who occasionally dined with the Phlipons, and sat out the long "*aprèsdisnées*" around

the fire, chatting, reading aloud, reciting verses, discussing freely without heat or bitterness all things under the stars, and some things beyond them, appear singularly living and attractive through the dust of a century. One feels a faint retrospective envy of the girl who could gather about her, poor and obscure as she was, such a coterie of studious and intellectual men, and a conviction that the social conditions which produced them were more favorable to the expansion of mind and development of character than modern historians are disposed to admit. M. de Sainte Lette, M. de Sévelinges, the Captain of Sepoys, Demontchéry, the Swiss watchmaker Moré, the Abbé Bexon, a collaborator of Buffon, to whose works he introduced Manon, and Pictet de Warambé, a Genevese literary man of some note, who corresponded with Franklin, wrote for the Journal des Dames, and planned and discussed his articles with Manon, formed her little circle, in which M. de Sainte Lette was *facile princeps*. He was a man of sixty years, who having been a waster in his youth, had been obliged to become a worker in later life. To mend his broken fortunes he had passed thirteen years in Louisiana, as superintendent of the French trade with the Indians, where his "prodigious strength of body, fully equalled by that of his mind," is noted in a page of New World history. He was spending ten months in Paris when he made Manon's acquaintance (January 11, 1776), through a letter of introduction to her father, and was on his leisurely way back to Pondicherry, where he occupied an official position. He spent a large part of his leave in Paris at Manon's fireside.

Gentlemen of over forty years of age were considered harmless by M. Phlipon—a most vigilant duenna when younger men were present. The society of this disillusioned yet not embittered man of the world, who was also a man of affairs, who knew the savannas of America as well as the bosquets of Versailles, and whose naturally philosophical mind had been enriched and developed by his wide experience of men, brought a novel element into Manon's life. M. de Sainte Lette personified for her that knowledge of the world which she had hitherto often failed to discover in the specimens of the *ancien régime* that had drifted across her social horizon. His winning simplicity pleaded pardon for his mental and social superiority, and his utter absence of claim or pretension disposed his auditors to forgive his attainments. To the attraction of a frank though grave manner M. de Sainte Lette added an intellectual vigor and independence of character which the gentle "Sage" did not possess. No wonder, as Manon writes Sophie, the hours galloped by in his society, and M. de Sainte Lette seems to have felt for the eager, intelligent girl that indefinable yet most definite sentiment which it is the privilege and the consolation of the autumn of life to feel in its fulness.

There is a wistful sweetness, a sense of evanescence, a dim foreboding of separation in the friendship of the very young and the old. "Why did you come into the world so late?" "Why could you not have waited for me?" the old and young unconsciously ask each other. Manon's two friends were lost to her soon after she had learned to know and depend upon

them. Sunstroke carried off M. de Boismorel after an illness of only a few days (September 13, 1776), and M. de Sainte Lette died at Pondicherry in 1778–79. He had left a heritage to Manon in M. de Sévelinges, whom he had presented to her. They mourned Sainte Lette together, exchanged manuscripts, criticised each other's writings, for M. de Sévelinges had also coquetted with letters and corresponded for some time. M. de Sévelinges was melancholy, lonely, and sentimental. He possessed that delicate taste which Diderot remarked was the result of remarkable sense, delicate organs, and a melancholy temperament. Manon was pleased and flattered by his observations on her compositions. Indeed, the Sage and Sainte Lette had already surprised her by urging her to write, to choose a literary *genre*, and to develop and perfect it. "If I were a man I would do so," was Manon's reply to these encouragements.

Meanwhile she continued to chat and meditate on paper, though her time for so doing was filched from sleep and exercise, as she tells Sophie (December 25, 1776). "You find it strange that I write to you always at one o'clock in the morning. The details of my daily life will tell you how I pass my time. At this season I never rise until nearly nine o'clock; the morning is spent in household tasks; in the afternoon I sew, thinking hard all the time, and inventing anything that I please, verses, arguments, projects, etc. In the evening I read until supper-time, which time is not fixed, as it depends on the return of the master [of the house], who, always out during the day, with no regard for his affairs, leaves me too often to answer to

all comers who wish to see him on business. He comes home generally at half past nine, sometimes at ten o'clock and later. Supper is soon finished, for when there are few dishes, when one never speaks a word and eats fast, meals cannot last very long. Then I take the cards to amuse my father and we play piquet. During the intervals I try to make talk; laconic answers cut it short. I turn my skein to catch up a bit of thread, I toil but in vain. Time passes, eleven o'clock strikes, my father throws himself on to his bed, and I go into my room and write until two or three o'clock."

In June, 1777, the Academy of Besançon offered a prize for the best essay on "How can the education of women make men better?" Manon found the subject attractive, and wrote a discourse which she sent to the academy. There were nine competitors, among them Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. None of the papers quite filled the conditions, so the competition was adjourned until the next year, when neither Mademoiselle Phlipon nor the author of Paul et Virginie was represented. Manon's essay was reviewed and criticised justly and ably by M. de Sévelinges, whose notes she greatly prized and sent to her girl friends. To some extent he began to take in her life the place left sadly vacant by the death of M. de Boismorel. Manon was intellectually lonely. Her heart was unoccupied, financial ruin was before her, and her vision of pure and disinterested passion had proved a *fata morgana;* her relatives, though kind and affectionate, inhabited another planet mentally. Madame Desportes, in whose house assembled the most congenial people of Manon's acquaintance, was always making matches

for her, presenting potential husbands to her, and urging her to marry. Manon's cousins, the Trudes, were not intellectually stimulating. The husband, a manufacturer of mirrors, adored respectfully and distantly, yet most jealously, his wonderful, clever kinswoman, and bored her to extinction almost in consequence. Madame Trude was the Parisienne we have agreed to call typical. She combined a deep sense of the hollowness of the world with a passion for its futilities. She contrived to be truly pious and extremely coquettish synchronously, never missed a mass or a ball, and would pass three hours before her glass after sitting up all night with a sick friend. She would weep all the morning over her husband's roughness or neglect, laugh and sing all the afternoon, and dance all the evening. Neither of these people ever opened a book, or possessed an idea in common with the cousin they both loved. Association with them was like playing with grown-up children.

In this dearth of kindred minds M. de Sévelinges's companionship grew very precious to Manon. His letters were the loopholes through which she looked out on the world of intellectual activities. The practical M. Phlipon, who indulged in too many extravagances himself to permit any in his daughter, soon objected to a correspondence that cost several cents a day in postage-stamps. Manon rebelled against having her outlook walled up; she therefore begged her uncle Bimont to receive M. de Sévelinges's letters for her at Vincennes. The good abbé, willing as one of Shakespeare's priests to oblige a lady, forwarded the letters under his own hand. He had great con-

fidence in his niece, none whatever in his brother-in-law, and he regarded M. de Sévelinges as an ordinary suitor, rather old for Manon, a little too well born, a little too poor, to please M. Phlipon, but desirable in many ways.

Manon did not undeceive the amiable abbé, and the epistolary chat ran on smoothly until, in spite of his fifty-five years and his two grown-up sons, M. de Sévelinges fell in love, pallidly and waveringly, with Manon. Her dowry had shrunk to a pittance, his income was too small to support a second family without impoverishing his children. He therefore suggested to Manon, whose existence was becoming daily more and more precarious and unhappy through her father's disorders, that they should form a union like those of some notable early Christians, a marriage of mental communion and sympathy. Manon, who afterwards described this arrangement to Sophie and to M. Roland, had, without loving him, grown very fond of the sensitive, courteous gentleman, and asked nothing better than to become his daughter under the name of wife. Her radiant visions of happiness had been dimmed by painful acquaintance with the darker side of life. La Blancherie's defection and his impossible book, her father's dissipation, two or three unpleasant experiences, had somewhat tarnished her ideal of man, and she esteemed herself fortunate in becoming the lifelong friend of a philosopher who was also a gentleman.

But there was a vagueness, a mysterious reticence about M. de Sévelinges's proposal that was disturbing to confidence. Manon's frankness did not encounter

equal candor. She was puzzled, then suspicious, and the correspondence languished. One day she was called to the shop to see a customer in the absence of her father. She found there an elderly gentleman who ordered an engraved seal. There was something strangely familiar in his voice and appearance, but it was not until he had gone that Manon realized, in a bewildered way, that the customer was M. de Sévelinges in disguise (November 1, 1778). Far from being touched by this romantic escapade of her ambiguous suitor, Manon was shocked and annoyed. She realized the dangers of despising the defenses of conventionality. She felt also that M. de Sévelinges had forfeited his dignity by this clandestine visit. Her own self-respect suffered through the suspicion that he thought such concealment could be agreeable to her. It never occurred to her that her adroit arrangement for receiving his letters might suggest further enterprises *sub rosa* to an experienced man of the world, who, "like the poor cat i' the adage," stood hesitating on the brink of a decision. His action decided Manon, however, and put her on her guard. Still, she did not break openly with him until after her betrothal to M. Roland, when she gave the *coup de grâce* to their moribund correspondence in a letter that is a model of kind severity.

The young girl who ventured outside the stockade of convention had to be prepared for an occasional attack, and sometimes even a blow. Manon had counted too much on the rectitude of her intentions and her conviction that frankness might be substituted for prudence. As it was, she returned from this little sally into the open with no more harm than an added

distrust of men and their professions. Her early ideal was being battered into a different shape by harsh experience. She was learning that straight thinking does not necessarily imply clean living, and that the possession of the wit to know does not furnish the will to do the right, and was in consequence disposed to look reverently on any one who united these qualifications. She realized that philosophy, like devotion, had its hypocrisies and its Tartuffes; therefore, she always anticipated with pleasure the visits of a friend of the Cannets, who they assured her was a sage in conduct as well as in belief.

CHAPTER VIII

ROLAND DE LA PLATIERE

THIS M. Roland de la Platière, inspector of manufactures, bearer of a letter from Sophie, had presented himself to Manon on January 11, 1776. "He is an enlightened man, of blameless life, to whom one can only reproach his admiration for the past at the expense of the modern, which he undervalues, and his weakness for liking to talk too much about himself," Sophie had written of him. Manon was busy with a letter to her friend when M. de la Platière called. She received him *en négligé*, in white dimity short gown and ruffled petticoat, her unpowdered hair turned up under a big cap. She had expected a sage—she saw a tall, lean, yellow man, of some forty odd years, already slightly bald. His address was good though somewhat formal, and his simple, easy manners allied the politeness of the well-born to the gravity of the philosopher. This gravity was neither forbidding nor severe, for when he spoke his regular features became animated and expressive, and a shrewd smile transformed his thoughtful face. His voice was deep and his diction, though piquant, was harsh. "An exterior more respectable than seductive," thought Manon, whose eyes were full of the vivacious, glowing face of another philosopher of half M. de la Platière's years. But the latter had dwelt so lately with the rose—he had just left Sophie—that Manon welcomed

him with timid cordiality, blushed, stammered, and listened with pretty deference to his opinions on Raynal, Rousseau, Voltaire, travelling, and, of course, the government. The girl was too fluttered to appear well; she regretted it naïvely to Sophie, fearing that she had not justified her friend's report of her. Nevertheless, M. de la Platière asked permission to come again, which she accorded gladly: "*Nous verrons s'il en profitera.*"

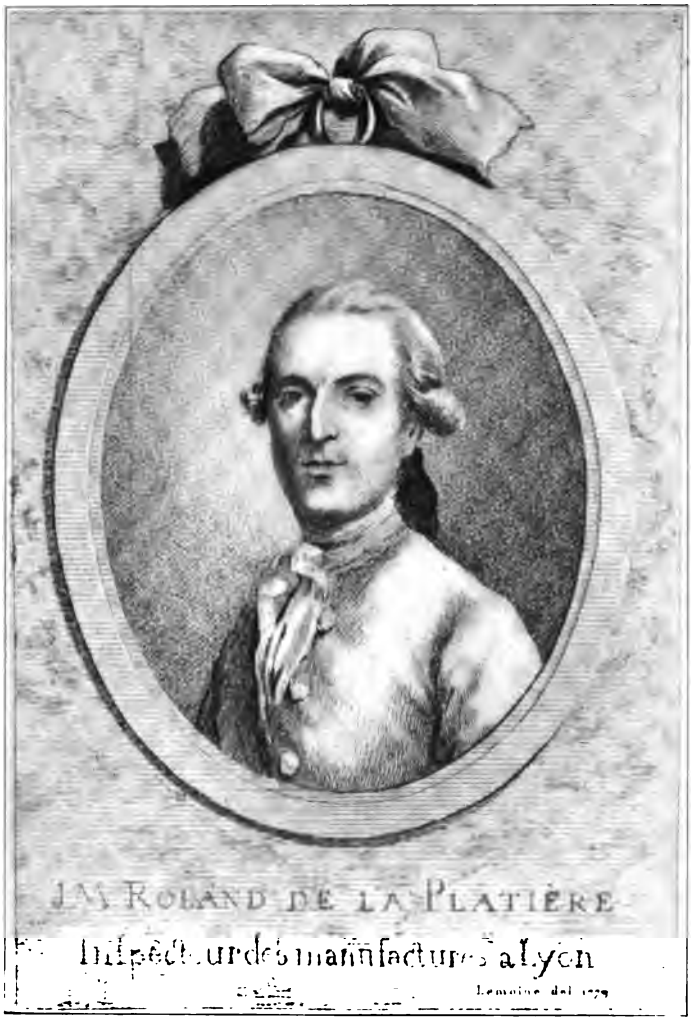
He did profit by it, but the second visit was less agreeable. Manon had a bad cold, Papa Phlipon played watch-dog, a tribute to the personal charm of the caller, and grew impatient and fussy as the visit lengthened; Manon was nervous and annoyed by her father's rudeness, and "was more stupid than the first time." M. de la Platière laid violent hands on her idols. Buffon was nothing but a charlatan, his style was only pretty, and as for the Abbé Raynal, his history was not philosophical, it was a novel, only fit for toilet-tables. These heresies startled Manon. She confesses, however, that she does not prize Raynal quite so much as before, and is growing suspicious of Buffon—"I pick them over more." The philosopher was evidently as independent as she was in his opinions. They agreed better about the ancient writers, while regretting that "modern history does not show those touching revolutions where whole peoples struggle and combat for liberty and the public good." Patience, my friends, you may yet see this affecting spectacle!

By May, Manon had learned to appreciate the mental rectitude, sound judgment, and chastened good taste of M. de la Platière's literary criticisms, as well

as the variety and extent of his information. In June she dreamed of him, and was sorry not to know anything about him. In July she gently resented Sophie's criticism of him, and in August she accepted the custody of his manuscripts and the responsibility of their disposal in case he should never return from a long Italian journey. M. de la Platière dined at the Phlipons, with Sainte Lette two days before he left Paris. Good-bys were gayly said, and the traveller asked M. Phlipon's permission to embrace Manon; it was accorded, and though the ceremony was more solemn than tender, Manon graced it with a blush. "You are happy to go away," said Sainte Lette in his deep voice, "but hasten your return in order to ask as much again."

The inspector's Italian tour was a long one. During the eighteen months that he was absent from France, Manon had ample leisure to study the papers left in her care, and to form a very definite opinion of their author. Travels, reflections, projects for future works, personal anecdotes, incidents, and observations, jotted down roughly without any pretense of arrangement, all bore the impress of a strong character, a stern ideal of duty, and, above all, ceaseless mental activity.

For M. de la Platière had also been prodigiously industrious in his economy of time and use of opportunity. And his opportunities had been wrested from a contrary fate. If the sight of a good man struggling with adversity is a noble spectacle for gods, the inspector of manufactures had contributed largely to the entertainment of Olympians. Born with many advantages, the perversity of destiny, that vengeful,



J. M. ROLAND DE LA PLATIÈRE, INSPECTOR OF MANUFACTURES AT LYONS

Engraved by Lemoine in 1779

uninvited fairy godmother who so often intrudes at a birth-feast, had by some trick or turn changed them to stumbling-blocks in the way of achievement.

Jean Marie Roland de la Platière, born in the *manoir* of Thizy (called Thézé to-day), baptized the 19th of February, 1734, was one of the ten children of Jean Marie Roland, the elder, and Damoiselle Thérèse Bessye de Montozan. The Rolands were an old family (even if we disregard a vague ancestor believed to be a man-at-arms of Charles VII), and begin their line with the definite Nicholas Roland, inhabitant of Thizy-en-Beaujolais, who in 1574 married a certain Dame Gabrielle Mathieu. We do not know if like the Prince Charming and the Beautiful Princess of fairy-tale they lived happily ever afterwards, but they certainly had many children, and the children achieved position and honor. Such picturesque titles as "Seigneur de la Place," "Prieur," "Ecuyer," "Grand Pénitencier," "Prévot des Marchands de Lyon," "Conseilleur au Parlement de Paris," "Baron de la Tour," "Chevalier de Saint Louis," "Capitaine exempt des Cent Suisses du Roi," pleasantly enliven the family-tree. That of noble Damoiselle de Montozan was even richer in such decorations, and one of its branches had been grafted on to the trunk of the Choiseuls. The damoiselle had aristocratic tastes, played high, kept an open house, and loved company, with the usual result. When Jean Marie Roland, the elder, died, his heir, Dominique, was obliged to sell the *manoir*, the big town house at Villefranche, and the domain of La Platière at Thizy. The Rolands, however, still kept the name of La Platière, which they

transferred to the Clos of Thézé, some miles from the town of Villefranche, which still belongs to the family. Five of the ten Roland children had died. Dominique and his three younger brothers had all become churchmen, when to the youngest one, Jean Marie, was offered, at the age of eighteen, the choice of going into business or becoming a priest. He declined both careers, and deciding to study manufactures, he went to Lyons, then a centre of the linen trade. Two years later he travelled on foot to Nantes to take ship for the West Indies, but was prevented from sailing by a hemorrhage from the lungs. M. Godinot, a cousin of the Rolands, who was inspector of manufactures in Rouen, offered the young Jean Marie a position there, which he gladly accepted, and began his life's work: the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of manufactures, not only in France but in foreign countries as well.

His zeal and intelligence made him many friends in Rouen. Besides his technical studies and work in the factories, he applied himself to science, mathematics, chemistry, botany, and even drawing. His capacity and industry recommended him to Trudaine, the so-called "*ministre du commerce*," who promised him the first vacant position of importance, and meanwhile sent him to Languedoc (1764), where he found both commerce and manufactures "in a horrible state of ruin and commotion." Here he first realized the extent and the importance of his work, its intimate relations with natural products, with nature herself, as well as to sister industries, and its close ties with society, law, government, and neighbor nations. In

Rouen, Roland, as history calls him, was a diligent, patient student; in Languedoc he became an energetic and enthusiastic economist. "The zeal of an inspector, like his knowledge, should find its limits only when there remains no more good to do," he wrote just before he fell ill from overwork.

Trudaine, reluctant to kill the willing horse, then offered Roland the inspectorship of Picardy, which he accepted (1766). This was at once a comfortable and an important position, for Picardy was the third manufacturing province in France. But to Roland no post would ever be a comfortable one; he was too active-minded, too bent on improving and reviving the national industries. Picardy was in a ferment; greater and smaller interests were in collision, and new decrees and interfering *parlements* were fomenting disturbances. Home manufactures had been permitted by a decree of 1762 to the peasants, and the merchants and factory owners of Amiens were in open rebellion in consequence. They complained that all the standards of excellence had been lowered by this injudicious liberty of production, and that the quality of the goods had deteriorated. Roland soon discovered that the fires, robberies, and murders that afflicted the city were due entirely to the misery of the people, caused in its turn by the indefinite freedom accorded to industry, which had degenerated into utter license. "We must give complete liberty in taste, the choice of stuffs, the arrangement of colors and designs; on the contrary, we must be very rigid about everything that extends and assures consumption, like lengths, widths, and qualities," Roland decided. How he com-

promised, how he pacified, solicited, argued, and pleaded, he has himself described at greater length than I can follow here. As he defended the workman and protected the poorer and smaller producers, he was respected and beloved by the people, and, very naturally, disliked and dreaded by the great merchants and middlemen. A meddling, scribbling, criticising Jack of all trades, who hobnobbed with every master workman in the province, knew every factory, inspected every bleaching-field, learned every process, and who, instead of jogging along in the old rut, was constantly suggesting improvements, calling for new processes, and inviting conservatives to admire and imitate foreign inventions—such was Roland in the eyes of the *gros bonnets* of Amiens.

Fortunately their hostility was impotent to check his investigations or his ameliorations. He went often to Paris to keep abreast of scientific discovery; he made long trips through France to visit her industrial centres, and followed them by foreign tours through Holland, Flanders, Switzerland (where incidentally he visited Ferney and dined with Voltaire), England, where he examined the new spinning-machine, Germany, where in the great fairs of Frankfort and Leipsic, the meeting-place of "Occident and Orient, he found people of all nations and merchandise of all kinds." There Roland conceived the idea of great international exhibitions of arts and industries, an idea which was realized more than half a century after his death, and for which he has never been honored.

Roland's accounts of his toils and travels are a valuable chapter in the history of French manufactures,

and are interesting to the general reader. Everything that he examined was noted, measured, and carefully described, always with a view to the improvement of the home product. "Everywhere I collected patterns and samples of the stuffs I had seen; everywhere I noted dimensions, prices, time, place, road and transportation expenses, and calculated the difference in foreign wages and moneys . . . this time, as always, I brought back bales and volumes; this time, as before, I opened them both to all. Samples, tools, machines, methods, processes, notes, everything, I offered for the improvement of our factories and our commerce with as much ardor as I had collected them." This is not overmodest, but Roland's assertions are corroborated by his contemporaries and fellow workers. These reports are aids to appreciation of the reforms of Turgot, and strongly suggest that if they had not been opposed the Revolution would have come in a milder guise.

During the industrial pilgrimages Roland, backed by Trudaine, kept up a running fight with the municipality, the merchants, and the Chapter of Amiens. Always protecting the liberties of the workman against the encroachments of the employer, he added to his cares a campaign against the tyranny of the Chamber of Commerce, the Municipality, and the royal agents over the manufacturers, whom they considered as inferiors and excluded from the local government. Not contented with these reforms, this indefatigable combatant of abuses attacked the monopolies, and even the immemorial rights of the Chapter, who owned the only fuller's mill in this manufacturing town of

fifty thousand souls, and refused to allow a second one to be built! The retirement of Trudaine (1777) resulted in the victory of the Chapter and the discomfiture of poor Quixote-Roland. He was more successful in the improvements he introduced in machinery, tools, and goods, notably the manufacture of cotton velvet, and under his inspectorship the number of shops in Amiens trebled. In spite of the enmity of the rich and ruling class in Picardy, his researches and their results made him many friends. He was an honorary member, associate, and correspondent of several academies in Rome, Paris, Montpellier, and many other French towns, and his writings were quoted and respected by his fellows. One of his suggestions has become a world-wide reality and the grandest of modern festivals—the international industrial exhibition, as already noted.

In spite of his tireless labors in his profession, Roland had found time to become not only a well-informed but a cultivated man. He was as familiar with the liberal philosophy of his day as with its *belles-lettres* and its history. He was a lover of Italian poetry and of Latin literature. His taste was pure, though rather austere. He was a man of sentiment also, and from his busy life romance had not been excluded. This rigorous, rather brusque, decidedly combative man of affairs, with his firm grasp on the realities of existence, was not without imagination. He possessed an inner life of tender memories and proud aspirations. Long before he had won the position of inspector, long before he could be described as bald and yellow, he had loved and been loved by a young Rouennaise, a Made-

moiselle Malortie, who had died in 1773, and who, renamed Cléobuline by Roland, had been mourned in prose and verse by her betrothed. Later there had been several fond adventures, notably a tragic episode with a young Italian widow, proving that the observing traveller had not confined his attention to machinery and manufactures. The brilliant and coquettish Henriette Cannet was deeply interested in the grave inspector, and followed with some anxiety the progress of his intimacy with Mademoiselle Phlipon.

The later portraits of Roland, painted and engraved during his ministry in 1792, show a high-nosed, delicate-featured elderly gentleman, a kind of benevolent ascetic in expression, with the unmistakable air of the philosopher and the idealist. His loosely flowing hair is characteristic of the reformer of all ages, and his frilled shirt is open at the throat in a décolletage that at sixty is pleasing chiefly to the wearer. But the gentleman who presented Sophie's letter to her friend sixteen years before was a very different person. Join-Lambert discovered not long ago an engraving from a drawing of Lemoine's, dated 1779, that presents a truer image of the inspector of Amiens. This M. de la Platière, simply and conventionally dressed, with the high stock and cravat, the tight-fitting coat, and the powdered hair neatly rolled at the sides and confined at the back by the black *solitaire*, is a man of the world. The well-cut face is amiable though alert-looking, and suggests that the original of the portrait did not lack a certain quiet distinction.

M. de la Platière was, however, far less conventional than his portrait. He possessed an uncompromising

sincerity that many times had proved a lion in the path of success. His clear vision, his close grip on facts and their relations, made polite deceptions and the little tactful arrangements of truth by which favor is gained, and superiors flattered and managed, distasteful, almost impossible, to him. He justly censured the hobbles and fetters by which French trade was partially paralyzed. His valuable reports and intelligent suggestions were couched in terms of uncompromising candor. He disdained also to conciliate the varletry and underlings, whom even now in a republican France it is wise to propitiate. Very naturally Cerberus unsopped fell upon the reformer in the rear. Roland's ruthless veracity qualified the popularity he won by the unequalled prosperity he brought to Amiens. He was censor as well as philanthropist—a kind of Cato Franklin. Still, it is wise to remember in reading hostile criticism of him that Roland was an innovator, and was consequently constantly accused of pride, conceit, overconfidence in himself, as well as a lack of loyalty and patriotism, because he pointed out errors and blunders in the administration, and often advocated adoption of foreign processes and inventions. Self-reliance, even a touch of arrogance were not unpleasing to Mademoiselle Phlipon, disgusted with the supple spines of shopkeepers. Roland's high valuation of his own services and labors, his attachment to his own opinions, his exacting temper, seemed to Manon so many proofs of his independence of character. She was inclined, perhaps, after her recent disappointments, to overvalue energy and industry in man. To her, frankness implied courage; Roland's contempt for formalities and conventions, his cham-

pionship of the poor and helpless, and his patient endurance of discomfort and privation, she counted among the manly virtues she was temperamentally qualified to appreciate. That he was peevish and exacting, alternately irritable and morose from constant overwork and poor health, she only learned later.

As it was, in the disenchantments and desolation of her life he figured as the virtuous sage, and we know that Manon's ideal man had long been a philosopher. After the eclipse of La Blancherie, the death of M. de Boismorel, the departure of Sainte Lette, and the mystification of M. de Sévelinges, Manon's thoughts centred in M. Roland. He and M. Sainte Lette had spoiled her, she wrote Sophie, by giving her a dangerously high standard of comparison. When M. Pictet, the Genevese writer, congratulated her on having refused a very eligible suitor because he was indifferent to her, she reflected that "she never found her own ideas and tastes except in men of a certain age who had corrected the errors of youth, and, above all, in those who had known misfortune and the vicissitudes of the world." The news of Roland, his hasty yet suggestive notes in his travels, brought to her from time to time by his brother Pierre, who was the Prior of Cluny, stimulated her imagination and occupied her thoughts. "*Qu'il est heureux de parcourir cette belle Italie,*" sighed the stay-at-home as she read of Roland's wanderings. They possess interest even for the reader of to-day who glances over the six small volumes with their long title: Lettres écrites de Suisse, d'Italie, de Sicile, et de Mâlthe (sic) par M. . . . avocat au Parlement, à Mlle. . . . en 1776, 1777, 1778. Amsterdam, 1780.

Many of these letters were not sent in sequence to

Mademoiselle Phlipon. The epistolary form, so popular in the letter-writing age, was given to Roland's rough notes after his marriage when they were arranged for publication with the assistance of Madame Roland. M. Join-Lambert says of them rather severely: "*Le mariage, auquel ces confidences littéraires ont contribué, a peut-être été pour Roland son plus réel succès d'auteur.*" Yet it would be difficult to-day to find a manufacturer or worker in applied science who could produce such an all-round book of travel. Roland had many interests; the extent of his observations was not curtailed by the exactness of his information or the definite object of his travels. He *made* time for general sightseeing and for visits to celebrities. Though his work was primarily an account of the industries of the countries visited and of agriculture in its relations to commerce, historical and literary associations and the fine arts found place in it, as well as reflections on government and institutions.

The eighteenth-century traveller in Italy, were he Doctor Burney, Arthur Young, or Goethe, was, of course, bound to form and express opinions on the fine arts. They wore curious mental blinders, those intelligent folk; invariably bent the knee before the shabbiest bit of antiquity, and averted a scornful eye from the noblest mediæval monuments. Roland erred in good company when he sought out the temples of Sicily and ignored the churches of Palermo. He was more impartial in his judgments of men. Freethinker as he was, he saw much to commend in the mild, tolerant rule of the Pope, for "Under it a sage could

live always in security." Roland's relationship with the Choiseuls, then influential in Rome, was probably most useful to him where influence counts for so much. He had several interviews with Pius VI, whom Roland praised for his amiable simplicity and courtesy, and who "*a su déposer ses grandeurs et s'entretenir avec un être son semblable, sans lui rien faire perdre de la dignité de l'homme.*" (Lettre XVIII, Tom. V.)

Roland's personal dignity has suffered somewhat in the letters of his travelling companion, Bruyard, who was appointed by the minister to assist him in his notes and observations. Like those of many young assistants, Bruyard's criticisms of his chief are severe. These animadversions vary in gravity. Roland desired to be addressed as Bias, but at the same time he generously bestowed on the carping young neophyte the equally honored name of Thales. It was as Bias, by the way, that he corresponded with Mademoiselle Phlipon, who, more modern or more modest, replied under the name of Amanda, instead of that of Diotima or Hypatia. These innocuous diversions were popular among both the lettered and the illiterate. Practical unlearned folk, like Queen Anne and the great duchess, addressed each other more prosaically as Morley and Freeman. Apparently these good people extracted as much pleasure from such puerilities as we do from hyphenations and mysterious, mediæval spellings of commonplace prænomens.

Bruyard's second indictment was far more serious. Roland was scant of luggage, sparing of fresh linen. This is a grave charge, and forecasts the untidy republican of '92, the minister of the interior affronting

the court by his shoe-strings in place of buckles, and his wide-brimmed hat.

As to Roland's mind—the young critic admitted that he had brains, but observes that when he met some one who had more, he was mute, all ears, and later repeated what he had heard as though it were original. "He knows all books, their authors, and their printers, and seems a *savant* to a librarian. He has travelled a great deal—he is a naturalist, or thinks he is, for what isn't he? Finally, I am a dolt, an ignoramus, I know nothing, and he knows everything." Perhaps the animus of this paragraph may be explained by this coda. The valet's testimony may be valuable but he does not see much of the hero, after all, and is as prejudiced as the enthusiast, only in a different way. The youthful censor is not more favorable to Mademoiselle Phlipon: "He [Roland] often read her letters to me, *qui annoncent une demoiselle de beaucoup d'esprit, mais d'un esprit exalté, et qui tout en gémissant d'être née du sexe féminin, en laisse cependant entrevoir les faiblesses.*" So much for Manon. He was not easily deceived, this young Bruyard.

It was perhaps in an exalted mood, or more likely in a lonely hour, that one day, some time in the summer of 1777, Amanda wrote the peripatetic Bias a certain "*charming little letter,*" possibly after La Blancherie had proved himself truly "feather-headed," or Papa Phlipon had been unwontedly trying. Until then Roland had made all the advances. It was he who had paid long and frequent calls, undismayed by close parental attendance, and who had practically made Manon his literary *confidente* and executrix—no small

mark of confidence in one who had friends among well-known men of letters. Now it was the girl's turn. Her letter, received in Rome, was not answered until some time later. Roland also was engaged in an experimental affair of the heart with an accomplished widow of Leghorn. From this adventure he emerged trailing his wing and dragging his claw, in sore need of renovation. Apparently Mademoiselle Phlipon's "*charmante petite lettre*" arrived opportunely to poultice his lacerated breast and salve his wounds. He carried it with him to his home in Villefranche, where he laid by for repairs after his strenuous journeyings, for a traveller's life was not padded with comforts. "Leaving Paris in 1776, I returned in 1778 after an absence of eighteen months. I had again traversed Switzerland, travelled over all of Italy, crossed the Alps three times and the Apennines three. I had visited Sicily, both the towns and the country. I had pushed on to Malta. Nine times I took ship. Three times I was in the most imminent peril, and in danger of death. I slept thirty nights on bare boards. I was eighty nights without undressing, twenty-two consecutively, only occasionally changing my linen in the daytime. I bore incredible fatigues, rushing about, studying all day long, often lacking the necessities of life, and writing at night. The passion for seeing and learning bore me up. I reached home, fell down like a stone, and remained several weeks between life and death."

It was during his convalescence that Roland answered Manon's letter. He was still ill, depressed, weak in body and in soul. He spoke darkly of seek-

ing death, of a mysterious sorrow, of the hollowness of things terrestrial, and the comfort to be derived from the letters of a clever and charming young friend. Roland, the Spartan, the strong and self-sufficient Roland, evidently wished to be petted. The wounded hero is not less irresistible than the conquering warrior. Manon dressed his hurts with deft, gentle fingers. Roland's numbed heart stirred under her soft touch, expanded, finally overflowed. A correspondence of which one hundred and twelve letters remain records the *états d'âme* of two exceptional beings, as well as the rise and progress of a singular affair of the heart. Manon's first letter in reply to Roland's plaint is an outburst of girlish enthusiasm. I think the page of the Memoirs devoted to her courtship and marriage would have been written less summarily if Madame Roland could have glanced over Mademoiselle Phlipon's love-letters again. Alas! the fires are as evanescent as the snows of yore.

Manon replied warmly and instantly to the battered sage's appeal for sympathy (October 17, 1777). She reproached him for waiting until he was less melancholy to answer her letter. She had thought him so tranquil and happy, while she was passing the hardest year of her life, except the one when her mother died. Would you believe it, yesterday she was writing to Sophie: "I spend my life with indifference, and I would lose it without pain." "This expression escaped me in a moment of sadness, but I feel that friendship makes me change my language." She wishes to see the rest of his notes, and she ends by a confidence. Roland, if he returns to Paris before he answers her

letter, must glide lightly over what she has written of her sorrows.

A very pretty *entrée en matière*. Apparently Roland thought so, for he sends his appreciative young friend the remaining manuscript of his travels. Her acknowledgment of the receipt of it is more didactic than enthusiastic. These notes included an account of his suit to the intractable widow, and Manon found much matter in them to increase her misanthropy. Roland's Italians were not estimable. "One must escape to the heart of Switzerland or the banks of the Thames to be reconciled with one's kind." To these generalities a little lesson is tacked on. "I am glad that you have traversed—a tempest, and I congratulate you with all my heart. It seems to me that each trial while exercising the strength of the soul should increase it; from this point of view misfortune becomes an advantage to those who know how to bear it. Therefore, I am far from pitying you at present."

The key is lower, and the rather curt criticism of the longed-for notes is the reverse of enthusiastic. Still the friendship grew apace, for (August 12, 1778) Roland begs Manon to conceal the frequency of his visits from her old friends the Cannets; Manon writes to protest against this dissimulation and the reserve and petty deceits it imposes on her natural openness. However, the lady doth protest too little, and her letter is rather an expression of the pleasure she feels in sacrificing her candor for Roland's comfort than a plaint of her infidelity to Sophie.

A letter from Amiens of December 30, 1778, contains the explanation of Roland's request. Henriette

Cannet loves him. It is to spare her that Roland hides his assiduities to her friend. The poor girl is ill —in fear of death. She talks with Roland, says many "*choses honnêtes*"; her grieved brother tells him something that shows they still have hopes of him, "but she —she knows well that—nothing—nothing—nothing," Roland writes enigmatically. This must have been mournful news for Manon, yet she gives but a few lines to it in her long answer (of January 3, 1779) to Roland's letter. Their intimacy was greatly increased by this secret between them, and poor Henriette's disappointment drew them closer together. Nevertheless, Roland was prudent, and in a guarded letter, written to thank father and daughter for some New Year's gifts, he retreated from the position he had seemed to occupy. Perhaps this was only a formal note to be read aloud to Papa Phlipon. Who knows? Habitual frankness makes strange compromises on certain occasions. As time ran on, the expected occurred, and the Memoirs record briefly that during the winter of 1778–79 Roland told Manon what she probably knew long before he was conscious of it—that he loved her. The girl confessed an equal flame, as her contemporaries would have put it, but lamented that marriage between them was impossible. Her lack of a suitable dowry, and her father's extravagance and misconduct, which might at any time break out into open scandal and increase the social inequality between her and Roland, were her reasons—reasons which the lover accepted with rather suspicious resignation. As love was out of reach, the philosophic pair agreed to forego it, and cultivate in its stead a kind of "*amitié amoureuse*."

A sentimental friendship is a beautiful but fragile possession. Love is an admirable actor, but for short seasons only. The doctor's hood (and is not Abelard there to prove it?) becomes him vastly, and he can fold his wings close under the scholar's cloak, and carry his torch like a sage's staff as well as he can wear a hundred other guises—but not for long. Love thus austerely draped and disciplined is a very comely godhead, devotion to him a very pretty and delicate form of asceticism—and Manon prided herself on acting "*en héroine de délicatesse.*"

Perhaps the sweetest season of a mutual passion is the budding time of love, when "*amor puer est,*" and thrives on such dainty fare as sighs and looks, when every advance is a delicious conquest of audacity over timidity, when a stolen ribbon is a treasure, and a hand-clasp an event. It is precious and fugitive as those rare days when the vernal flame of spring foliage is shut fast in the exquisite closed shells of the young leaves and the folded burgeons of the new blossoms. A warm rain, a few hours of genial heat, and all this lovely reticence and discreet promise flowers into frank fulfilment.

The devotees of friendship were peacefully happy for some months. They read and studied together, they wrote each other long letters, they exchanged verbal endearments in Italian, and quoted from sugary Amintas and Pastor Fidos. They confidently declared the tender sympathy that bound them was the one joy in an otherwise unpleasurable universe. Then one day in April something happened. What? From circumstantial evidence it may be inferred that "the val-

orous and erudite Shepherd Melindor" had saluted his *pastorella* with an ardor more pastoral than platonic, without the permission and the presence of Papa Phlipon, and the shepherdess was crying. Her pretty, unreal idyl was spoiled, shattered like a broken Dresden-china eclogue. Love's opening wings had ruffled his sober cloak, and his torch was aflame again. At least as much may be inferred from Manon's letter of April 22: "It seems that I am not satisfied with myself . . . and what is worse, you are the cause of it. I feel the truth of one of your remarks only too well, that the wrong-doing of your sex towards mine is all our fault." She will be responsible for them both in the future; she will keep their friendship pure. "I confess that your vivacity intimidates and frightens me. It would rob our intercourse of that happy confidence, that liberty, that noble and touching intimacy that are the fruits of virtue. It seems to me that friendship is not so ardent in its caresses. It is sweet, natural, and innocent."

Roland's reply showed him more moved than Manon, but impenitent. On the contrary, he reproaches Manon for the coldness and the firmness for which he praises her, also, though grudgingly. The knowledge of her worth excuses, nay, justifies his transports. He complains of her aloofness, her desire to continue to enjoy the peace of a quiet conscience. "*Tu pourrais donc être heureuse sans que je fusse heureux.* This thought wrung my heart. Ah! thou knowest but little of the ardor of my soul, and thou dost not seem to realize how much thou hast repressed it. Speak to me, then, of the tranquillity and the triumphs of thine. . . .

I have neither metaphysics to display nor antitheses to make. I have only a heart which is no longer mine to offer thee. It is frank to excess; it loves thee. That is all that I am worth, and it is enough for me to be worthy of thee in this way." All this is written for the first time in the intimate second person singular. This is Roland's first love-letter, as unreasonable, as artless, as boyishly triumphant as though it were written years before to Cléobuline. It was a most satisfactory declaration of love, but not in the least a proposal of marriage. Roland offered his heart but did not mention his hand.

Manon, as she wrote Sophie, was not an Agnès. She had been trained in a harsh school. Experience was her mistress; M. de Sévelinges's enigmatic wooing, her own self-deception about La Blancherie, poor donkey that she had generously draped in a lion's skin, were severe lessons. She had been too confiding; had counted on meeting her own candor and openness in her friend. Because she had played her game of friendship with cards on the table, she had expected equal fairness in her partner. She had again been roughly disillusioned. Her father, too, had served as an unconscious Helot to this young Spartan. She had close under her eyes a heartwringing example of the disintegration that follows yielding to impulse. She was doubly guarded by imagination as well as experience; was familiar with the language, the unconscious arts, the self-deception, the subterfuges, of passion. Richardson and Rousseau were her initiators, and their Clarissa and Julie were at once sympathetic companions and horrible examples. The novels of sentiment,

far from blinding her or distorting Manon's views of life, were an admirable substitute for emotional experience. So much has been written of the ravages of light literature, the disastrous effects of its perusal on the callow mind, that one is tempted to linger on its educational value, *en passant*, and its uses as a substitute for actual tarnishing experience. Manon was too well versed theoretically in the sophistry of passion, the specious reasoning of a yielding heart, not to be on guard at once on the receipt of Roland's letter. His own writings, as well as those of Rousseau and Richardson, had furnished her matter for caution.

Among Roland's papers there was one addressed to the obdurate Italian widow on the relative blamelessness of a *liaison* with a young girl compared to the heinousness of a love-affair with a matron. The Italian lady held the more usual opinion, and Roland devoted several pages to confuting her. Perhaps they were in Manon's mind when she replied to Roland's declaration. If his was a confession of love, hers was the confession of faith of an ardent young creature whose noble passion for truth and justice has suffered no compromise with conventions. This letter, in spite of its careful phrasing, is the spontaneous utterance of a generous heart. The young stoic's severe self-discipline, her impassioned pursuit of the finer issues of life, told in this difficult hour as the muscles of the trained gymnast stiffen to meet a sudden strain.

Manon's happiness was at stake. Youth was flying, life was narrowing and darkening all around her. This one man, who had amid mediocrity and pettiness seemed to her both an exception and an example,

was slipping down from the pedestal on which she had placed him. Roland, the sage, the wise, kind friend, was sinking into the mass of ordinary, selfish, greedy mankind. She could not easily consign him to that category. The one comforting reflection that remained was, Roland had misunderstood her—most ancient apology offered by loving women for the men who held them lightly. She would make her position very clear, trace the rise and progress of her feelings, explain her theory of conduct. Surely, then, without reproaches or complaints, he would realize how much he had been mistaken, and would judge and condemn himself. If there is a certain lawyer-like conciseness in this exposition, a firm, clear reasonableness that proves the fever in her veins had not reached her head, there is also a tender appeal to Roland, not to forfeit her confidence, to be for her the friend she can trust to defend her against her own weakness, if need be. In spite of elevation of style, between the smoothness of flowing periods we can divine the hurried throbs of a lonely heart, as deeply wounded in its affection as in its pride.

"You have laughed at my sermon, dread to hear my complaints. I am sad, discontented, and ill; my heart is oppressed. I am crying, but my few burning tears do not relieve me. I do not understand myself, or, rather, when I do it is to blame myself, and to tell you once and for all what I am and wish to be always." A succinct survey of Manon's emotional and intellectual life then followed. Her solitary childhood, her studies, her religious doubts and philosophical opinions, her ideals of duty, are swiftly and simply touched

upon, a prelude to a more intimate review of her present situation. "Feeling deeply the obligations implied by the holy names of wife and mother, I resolved to assume them only for a being worthy of my entire devotion. Among those who sought it one only, of whom I have spoken to you (M. de Lbl.), deserved my heart. For a long time I kept silence, and it was only when I realized our impossible situation that I spoke, to beg him to leave me. I have since then had reasons to congratulate myself on this resolution, which at the time was inexpressibly painful to me. Many changes have altered my situation in life, but I have, in spite of them, persisted in my determination to sacrifice everything but my ideal. My fortune has lessened, but my pride has increased. I would not enter a family that did not esteem me enough to consider itself honored by allying itself with me, and I should be indignant with any one who in marrying me thought he was doing me a favor. Naturally enough, with these opinions, I have counted upon a single life as my lot. In this estate my duties would be fewer and less sweet, perhaps, but not less severe and exacting. I looked upon the charms of friendship as pleasant compensations; I desired to enjoy them with the delicious abandonment of confidence, but you are leading me too far; it is against this that I try to defend myself. I saw in your strong, energetic, enlightened, and experienced mind the stuff for an ideal friend; I delighted in regarding you as such, and adding to the gravity of friendship all the feeling of which an affectionate nature is capable. You were moved by this, and you awakened in my heart an emotion against

which I believed myself armed. Then I did not veil it; I described it unreservedly, and I expected from your generosity the help that I needed. But far from sparing my weakness, you daily became more enterprising, and now you dare to ask me the cause of my embarrassment, my silence, and my fears. Monsieur, I may become the victim of feeling, but the plaything of any one, never. You must have met in society many women a thousand times more lovable and interesting than I am who proved to you that the attraction of pleasure was strong enough to make them judge leniently of an amiable weakness, and the fugitive attachment that caused it. They can yield in turn for those who, one after another, possess the art of charming them. Brought up in seclusion, I may be rustic and shy, but I cannot make a pastime of love. For me it is a terrible passion, that would possess my whole being and influence my whole life. Give me back your friendship or fear to force me to see you no more." (April 23, 1779.)

To this appeal Roland replied diplomatically. He instantly returned to *vous* and to mademoiselle. He was hurt and indignant. His intentions were innocent. He was no vile beguiler of maidenly affections. He justified himself by remarking that his frankness was greater than Manon's, and exercised earlier in their acquaintance than hers. With her his heart was always on his lips. As to his outburst: "Deeply moved, I believed that without crime I was *sharing* feelings which you accuse me of, and blame me for possessing. I do not analyze your principles, I respect your person. I may become unhappy through having

known you, but I would die before I could insult you. I do not pretend that you consider my happiness; it is enough for me not to trouble yours, and if it is too deeply affected by a sentiment that enslaves me, and I am to see you no more, I will try to forestall the fatal moment when you propose to proscribe me."

Did Manon feel rather flat when she read this miffed answer to her tender heroics? The Sieur Roland, accused of being too enterprising, borrowed the methods of a country boy, who, when asked to take his arm from the back of a girl's chair, complies with an air of shocked surprise at her unworthy suspicions. The resignation with which Roland proposed to anticipate Manon's edict of exile was not reassuring. He, too, was inclined to make terms. His notion of the privileges of friendship was more liberal than hers, and her repulse mortified more than it hurt him.

Manon's next letter was, therefore, devoted to soothing and coaxing him into good-humor. "O, my friend, why trouble a vision that could be so beautiful. . . . I am in a frightful state. I do not know what I am writing. How you have hurt me! My friend (I call you this sweet name with a melting heart), elsewhere you may find less rigor but not more tenderness." She was afflicted by the thought of his unhappiness, still more by his barbarous assumption that *she* could be happy while *he* was unhappy. He was invited to satiate himself with her despair and to contemplate her distress. If he dares to continue to be miserable, "fear to become so to a degree that you dare not face." She was again tender, sweet, and despairing, and Roland, manlike, forgave her for being

right because she was unhappy in consequence. Her letter brought a penitent lover to his knees. "My friend, my sweet friend, forgive me; I bathe your letter with my tears—let them efface my offense; forget my weakness; consider only my repentance." His situation is frightful, also, and will be until he learns that she still loves him, and loves to love him. He has added to her troubles. Dreadful thought! *Why* is she so tormented? *Why* does she not tell him? Does she not remember the proposal he made to her? Is not he cherishing it in his heart? Will she not answer it clearly and in detail, giving other reasons for her refusal than those she has already advanced, and which he has considered? "*Songe que je te vois sans cesse, et plus encore dans l'avenir que dans le passé. Songe. . . .*" (April 24, 1779.)

A hard-hearted Dulcinea would have been touched by this letter, and Manon was not marble. "If you had loved me less you would not have been guilty; the wrongs and errors of feeling may afflict, but they never offend." In plainer speech, it is easy to forgive the havoc caused by one's own charms. No, Manon cannot add other reasons to those she has already urged against Roland's proposal, "because I have no others. I might perhaps wish to have stronger ones to see you overcome them." She cannot enter into details; her poor *bonne* Mignonne is dying, and Manon is her nurse. In a letter written at five o'clock the next morning beside the sick-bed the details demanded are given and Manon's financial situation clearly explained. She has in her own right fourteen thousand francs. After they have been made over to her she will remain

with her father, paying her board, and keeping house for him. To take possession of her dowry was the only means of saving it for him as well as for herself. Papa Phlipon did not appreciate the Fabian method of helping folk in spite of themselves; he had worried the notary, complained to the neighbors, and tried to persuade himself and others, that he was a rococo Lear, the victim of filial ingratitude. Bonnemaman Phlipon, the Besnards, and the little uncle forced papa's hand—one can easily imagine the endless gabble, the discussions, disputes, and argumentation that grew out of the situation. In the midst of it the faithful Mignonne left hers. "I have always wished to die with you, mademoiselle," said the poor woman, pressing Manon's hand; "I am content." Then the little uncle carried off Manon, worn out with grief and watching, to Vincennes (April 27).

On the 6th of May she returned to Paris, where she found an ultimatum from Roland, that "they had been cruel enough" not to forward to her, and in which the prudent sage, for once treading circumspection underfoot, ordered rather than entreated Manon to say *yes* or *no* to his proposal. Their present *modus vivendi* was too torturing; there must be no more shilly-shallying, no more conditional mood. Will she marry him? She must decide now and quickly. Observations on general topics will not count as an equivalent. Yet he finds time to regret Mignonne. "*Je pleure avec toi sur la cendre de cette bonne âme : eh ! ce n'est pas de son malheur; j'envierais de finir comme elle. C'est la seule douleur que j'aimerais a prévoir dans ton cœur.*" (April 30, 1779.)

Happy Manon! She read, she wept, she tried to express herself, she stifled, she threw herself upon his breast, to remain there all his; at least, so she told him in a rapturous paragraph. She knew no other reasons against their marrying than those already given, "which he has conquered," she wrote, apparently forgetting that in triumphing over her unselfish scruples he had vanquished them in the leisurely Fabian manner, *cunctando*, but her *Te Deum* is as prompt and joyous as though they had been overturned by assault. "My pride equals my passion; in any other situation I would have offered myself to you; in mine you have had to oblige me to forgive your advantages. Why cannot I send you my letter on the wings of the wind? *Adieu, mon ami;* be happy and dispose of me to become so." (May 6, 1779.)

CHAPTER IX

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

MANON'S little bark might now be considered havened in still water, with the promised land of matrimony in sight. But it was to toss in storms for many months more. Roland desired their engagement to remain secret, and Manon acquiesced as before, exercising her own love of openness by writing him the history of her past tender passages with La Blancherie and De Sévelinges.] She had to send to Sophie for the documents in these cases, and invent a pretext for so doing. Her way was not rose-strewn. Sophie was vaguely jealous and suspicious; she felt that Manon was less communicative, less affectionate, less absorbed in her than she used to be, and reproached her friend, while Roland was retrospectively jealous of his predecessors in his betrothed's thoughts, and actively jealous of L. F., as he is called in the letters to Sophie, the *giovane* in those to Roland. This young man, of about Manon's age, was the pupil and apprentice of her father. He lived with the Phlipons, and soon sacrificed at Manon's shrine, a hopeless but fervent devotee. His goddess treated him leniently, like a great boy, scolded and laughed at him, lent him good books, administered medicine and advice when he was ill, mended his clothes and his manners, and tried to keep him from following in her father's descending footsteps.

It was incomprehensible to Roland that she could be so kind to one who was madly in love with her, who raged and pleaded, threatened to kill himself and Roland, and who sometimes diluted his sorrows in dissipation. No man, but every woman, will understand the girl's complex feelings towards this unhappy boy, and comprehend her indulgence and commiseration. L. F.'s perfect disinterestedness, and his frank abandonment to passion, threw into high relief the prudence and uneasy self-love of Roland. *"Ah! mon ami, comme on aime à vingt ans!"* Manon heedlessly wrote him, hardly a grateful reflection to her cautious betrothed. Nor was the project of the Besnards calculated to soothe him; they found an easy solution of the Phlipons' domestic difficulties in a marriage between Manon and L. F., an "inept" notion which Roland's fiancée nevertheless was obliged to combat.

An avowal of her engagement would have greatly lightened her cares, but Roland held her to her promise. His own affairs were not prosperous. He was discouraged and harassed by opposition to his reforms, and often balked of results by the inertia or the hostility of his superiors. His digestion was wretched, his nerves exasperated, and yet his demands on his strength were unremitting. We are apt to assume that nerve-strain and overwork are peculiar to our crowded life, but the tasks of the past, unrelieved by material comforts and unlightened by time-saving appliances, exacted prolonged mental tension, and consumed vital energy as ruthlessly as our own enterprises.

Roland's letters, shorter and fewer than his betrothed's, occasionally betray fatigue and irritability.

His natural and not unamiable jealousy of Manon manifests itself in a peculiarly unlovable way: in sharp criticisms of her friends and admirers, and, above all, in animadversions on her father's behavior. He found fault with Manon herself for what was inevitable in her situation: for practically becoming her father's servant, for doing kindly offices to sick neighbors. He assumed a tone of aggravating superiority to all her little world. Much of this "*picotage*" (pecking), as Manon called it (in *postnuptial* days), was really inspired by solicitude for her health, and the spirited girl received it with submissive sweetness, and answered it with apologies and explanations. Firm and rather imperious with her own family, to Roland she was all tender deference. She learned early in the game of love that irrefutable arguments and eloquent pleading were ineffective compared with an affectionate message, or a little wail of loneliness or longing. Her letters are not often playful, her situation was too strained for sportiveness, but they are ingenious in their divers expressions of affection. "I love you, you are dear to me, tell me so in your turn," was never set to more varied melodies. This literary art, if literary art it is, had become so natural through constant exercise that feeling flowed instinctively into form. The child had lisped in clear-cut prose, the maiden loved in lucent musical phrase. It was said of Madame Roland that she had the art of making all that she did appear to be the work of nature, as if such consummate art were not in itself largely nature's gift.

In any case, her letters must have been a consolation and a stimulus to a morose and doubting lover. Ro-

land meantime had begun to take his engagement seriously. He hired a house at Amiens, close to the cloister of Saint Denis, which was used as a cemetery; it would have seemed a lugubrious residence to an outsider, but "it will be the cottage of Philemon and Baucis," "you can make a temple of it," Roland wrote. More prosaic details followed: he had enough house and personal linen for two years, table-silver for eight persons, two soup-spoons; no other household stuff. Manon's trousseau preoccupied him. She must dress well; at least like other people. It was well enough for him to play the Quaker. "I can be what I really am; it is enough for me to be what I wish to be; but you, my wife, must be what you should be." The contemner of irksome conventions preserved them for his womenfolk. This imperfectly emancipated reformer held that he could cast off his cravat, but madame must retain her neckerchief. To this mademoiselle yielded a charmed assent. She was glad to reduce her wardrobe to the minimum, and planned to sell her mother's jewels, "for since she had hoped to possess Cornelia's some day she had just despised them." Her Roman met Roland's Greek (May 11). While waiting for the temple and the Gracchan ornaments, however, it was indispensable to conciliate a father who was Roman only in his severity.

When his daughter's dower was finally wrung from the protesting M. Phlipon, he incontinently invited her to leave his house. Terrified at the scandal this would cause, Manon wrote Roland, who suggested, as a last move, that she might tell her father that she was

affianced, and expecting to be married speedily. This magnanimous concession was clogged by a hard condition—she must not reveal the *name* of her betrothed, but explain that for family and business reasons the bridegroom-elect was obliged to remain *incognito* for the present.

Manon in reply urged that her father would certainly suspect *him* of being the coy lover, and that the secret would be as well kept if M. Phlipon were trusted wholly. By this time Roland had begun to waver and to regret what he had advised. His letter practically retracting this permission arrived too late; it was crossed by a rapturous missive from his fiancée.

"Kiss my letter, tremble with joy; my father is satisfied, he esteems you, he loves me. We shall all be happy! *Paix, salut, amitié, joie par toute la terre.* . . . *Mon cher maître,* listen to my story. . . . I was saying then—my faith, I don't know what I was saying." A calmer narrative of facts followed these introductory transports. Tactful Mademoiselle Desportes, *la prêcheuse,* as the lovers called her, prepared the recalcitrant papa for this revelation. After her gentle emollient sermon to soften his heart, came the *coup de théâtre.* The *salon* door was thrown open, and Manon threw herself, weeping, at her father's feet. Neither Greuze nor Rousseau could have arranged a more touching scene for a people with whom emotion spontaneously seeks dramatic expression.

"Overwhelm me with your anger, if I have deserved it," sobbed the kneeling girl, "but do not hate me!" M. Phlipon was very naturally silent and bewildered. Manon was stifled with sobs, Mademoiselle Desportes

began to explain, but the surprised M. Phlipon for once took the centre of the stage. This was his only monologue in the long domestic drama in which he sustained so unsympathetic a rôle:

"Your proceedings are always very strange," he said, addressing himself to Manon. "I can forgive your demand for a settlement that the law authorizes you to make, but which wounds and offends me, which proves that your attachment to me is no longer what it was, and that it has given place to ingratitude. To wish to remain with me, and yet to arrange your affairs as though you intended to leave me, is contradictory. All your motives displease me. If you had more worthy ones, I should judge differently, but in that case, why have you concealed them?"

"What!" answered Manon warmly. "If I had some reason that honor made me keep secret, would you consider keeping it a crime?"

"What secret could you keep justly from a father?"

"One that had been confided to me under a promise of secrecy, because certain circumstances made it impossible to tell it."

"This ambiguity does not impose on me; I want to see clearly into this; give me a good reason if you have it, or do not torment me any more."

Manon, who by this time had recovered her wind, replied by a plausible allocution: "You have declared, father, that our settlement would appear perfectly natural if there were any question of my marrying. That is exactly what it is for; that's my secret; you will soon know my reasons. Some one whose preference honors me, and flatters you, I am sure, has proved

his esteem for me by making his wishes known to me. His only object was to learn what mine were, and if he could count on them. Some delicate precautions to take with his own family prevented him from speaking to any one, even from making his declaration to you. He swore me to inviolable secrecy. From that time I felt that we ought to put our affairs in order. I thought it was better to arrange them between you and me. I resolved to induce you to do so. On the other hand, I did not hide the smallness of my fortune. I said that I should soon know how much it was, for my coming of age would remind you to tell me, but that a happiness that would straiten your means would be far from perfect for me. The delicacy and disinterestedness that had guided this person in all his ideas inspired him to answer that he was as deeply interested as I was in your welfare and comfort, and that he left to you the use of what would insure them. Believing as much in his probity and generosity as in his other good qualities, I made him a confession that I expected you to confirm some day with as much joy as I felt then. You may guess of whom I am speaking; it is useless to name him. At least, my cousin will permit me not to do so before her. . . ."

M. Phlipon, relieved, softened, overjoyed, caught the orator in his arms, and Manon wept on his breast "the sweetest tears she had ever shed in her life." Papa whispered Roland's name in his daughter's ear, and then assured Mademoiselle Desportes that his future son-in-law was all that he could wish for, and that in her choice he had a new proof of Manon's wisdom. He promised that though her fortune was mod-

est, she should have all that belonged to him one day, as he should never marry. These praises and promises were offered in a tone of such sincerity and fondness that Manon was convinced that he would bless her union with Roland "with all his heart."

She did not forget to slip in a word of warning to her fiancé between her ecstasies. In a few days Roland would receive a formal letter from her, to which he must send an equally discreet reply to be shown to papa. Her father had asked her if Roland knew that she was going to tell him of their engagement, and she had answered that she was authorized to do so. This avowal and showing him a letter from Roland would affirm M. Phlipon's confidence, and insure future peace. Roland will advise her, and she will submit her opinion to his. These prosaic arrangements made Manon grow lyrical again: "My loving friend, I owe you all my happiness. How transported you must be! You give me all that is dear to me; you give me back a father's love, you fill my heart with all the sweetness that nature, virtue, and love can bring to it. . . . And it is to you whom I respect, whom I esteem, and whom I cherish more than anything else that I owe these blessings. Surely one never dies of joy, since I feel all this and am still living." (June 27.)

To these effusions Roland replied dryly and coldly (June 29). She had forced his hand, she had told his secret; her delicious wooing phrases, her enchantments, could not juggle away the disagreeable fact that her common, dissipated old father was now in their confidence. "Do not write so many pages to

justify or excuse something done; I shall not think of it any the less, and I shall not speak of it again." Only a man very much concerned with his own dignity, very jealous of his authority, could have answered a cry straight from the heart with such frigid pettiness, to which poor Manon replied, in spite of Roland's prohibition by a justification of her confession. At least *his* liberty has remained quite unfettered. "I have not arrogated to myself your right to announce your intentions, or to hasten the time when you propose to do so."

This pained Roland and he expressed his distress at the same time, forbidding his *bonne amie* to add to it by alluding to its cause (July 3). He maintained an injured attitude all through the summer. M. Phlipon was a perennial source of complaint; his bad health was also a cause of offense. How will he be able to get on without the constant care that his daughter is obliged to give him? What does he intend to do? What arrangements has he made for the future? (August 5)

Manon, now general drudge and occasional sick-nurse, leaves her pots and kettles, puts down her needle, and answers gently, reasonably, with a noble patience, these querulous questionings. She shows a maternal indulgence to each fretful, carping arraignment. *Pauvre ami*, how ill and worn he must be to be so cross and exacting, how much need he has of love and consideration. The more fractious Roland, the more amiable she. That sweetness (of which she wrote when a girl of fifteen) "that men are accused of loving because it is so much needed in dealing with

them," stood her in good stead during this dreary stage of her life-journey.

But though Griselda was amiable she was sad, and her sadness penetrated Roland's hard self-love. Finally, he wrote to M. Phlipon, asking in good set terms for his daughter's hand, but still requesting secrecy. M. Phlipon found the demand glacial, haughty, and even lacking in respect to his daughter. The request for secrecy excited, not unreasonably, his suspicions; it was not in such clandestine manner that the tradesmen of the *cité* made their offers. Manon argued, coaxed, until he yielded an ungracious "He is a deserving man, I admit. He suits you very well. Let things go on. I won't prevent them." This negative consent was all she could extract (August 29). When a little later the attack was renewed, he repulsed it with a dry "He was in no hurry to write to me, I am in no hurry to answer him; besides, you are not asked for in this letter. It is obscure. I don't understand it." With the obstinacy of a weak nature, he stood by this decision. Manon, pushed to the wall, used the last argument of women—hysterics. Frightened, not touched, he promised to write, but before doing so asked to see all the letters Roland had sent her since he left Paris. To her astonished question: "What is your motive in making such a demand?" M. Phlipon answered airily: "It's a caprice that I have. If you refuse me this satisfaction, you can no longer count on me for anything." Such was his ukase, coupled with the request that she should leave the house. Decidedly, he was not conformable, *le père Phlipon*. To this proposed eviction Manon replied with dignity

"I shall not go. You have no right to send me out of your house. I ought not to leave it except under a husband's protection, and I shall not leave it in any other way. I have not lived here for twenty-five years honorably and decently, to go away in a manner that will shame and disgrace *you*." (September 1.) Papa made no answer, but took "the key of the fields," and sedulously avoided Manon.

Miserable days followed for her, bruised between the impact of two egotisms, her happiness depending on a father and a lover equally self-centred, who considered their own susceptibilities as more precious than Manon's peace. Finally, the tears and prayers of Tante Besnard and the weakness following an attack of illness again softened the resolve of the terrible parent, and he consented to write an answer to his elusive son-in-law-to-be (September 4).

"MR.:

"Questions of interest cannot certainly hurt the business in hand. My daughter has recently provided for them, having used the rights she acquired by coming of age three months ago to oblige me to give an exact account before a notary of the property of her dead mother. This business is now irrevocably settled. You have done me the honor, Mr., to write to me; I ought to have that of answering you. But first having asked my daughter to communicate certain things to me, that she has very dryly, and even, I dare to say, very roughly refused to do, this decides me to tell you with regret that she can freely enjoy the privilege of her majority to accelerate the termination of this affair."

Truly a very impertinent and paltry answer to a rather stiff and condescending demand! To the self-righteous Roland "it revealed a soul that he could not understand, and that filled him with horror." Imagine the feelings of King Cophetua, if, after having decided to honor the beggar-maid with his hand, her disreputable old father had received his royal request with a *pied de nez.*

Roland could not avenge this insult on the dishonored head of the impossible M. Phlipon, but M. Phlipon's child was convenient, and on hers were poured out the vials of Thales's just wrath (September 5, 1779). The awful abyss between his family and a creature like Manon's father was suddenly revealed to him. He had tried to realize it before, but could not. What spiritual vileness, and what a horrible handwriting! What baseness of character, what a low nature were betrayed in every line! Even the abbreviation of "Monsieur" (common enough in business correspondence) was fraught with sinister significance. Roland plunged her father's unpolished stylus into Manon's naked heart, and then turned it round. "I cannot defend myself against an attachment that delivers me up to you without reserve, and which even in this moment is graven on my heart with the deepest respect, but your *father*—O, my friend, your *father!* The very thought of him *gnaws me.* Black presentiments trouble and overwhelm me. His character, his conduct will become a living disgrace to my people, and will change their tender regard into a vulture that will ceaselessly devour my heart. No, my personal unhappiness would be nothing, but it is frightful to

think of your situation. I reproach myself for it with bitterness of self-disgust. I am oppressed with deadly sadness."

Two days after a second vial was unsealed. Manon had been culpably indulgent to this lost soul of a parent. Her devotion to an unworthy object awakened Roland to his own lack of duty to *his* relatives in allying them with a Monsieur Phlipon. It also revives memories of their loving care of him when he returned, frayed and spent, from his wanderings. His contemplated ingratitude to them filled him with tardy remorse. His secretiveness towards them weighed on him. To lighten his heart he sends them Monsieur Phlipon's monstrous missive with an account of the whole wretched business (September 7).

To this assault Manon opposed a saintly resignation. Her filial virtue had furnished the scourge for her punishment. She released Roland from any engagement to her, congratulated him on his family advantages, and herself on having been the means of recalling his obligations to him, approved his proceedings, and ended by asking him to remain her friend always (September 9). Ten days later Roland answered Monsieur (or, rather, as the outraged writer addressed it vengefully, "Mr.") Phlipon's letter in a superior and stately manner calculated to infuriate the meekest of mankind. In it, while grinding Mr. Phlipon to earth, and expressing his esteem and respect for his daughter, Roland haughtily withdrew the offer of his hesitating hand (September 19).

All through September and October Manon wavered

between her conviction that she ought to leave her father and seek some means of earning her living and her instinctive affection for her capricious parent, who at times was undeniably appealing and attractive. Her struggles between prudence and generosity perplexed and worried Roland, who remained untouched by a manly and apologetic letter written by the prodigal father in a remorseful moment (September 23). "Esteem and friendship remained to them," but neither seemed satisfied with these reasonable conditions. Roland discovered "that philosophy which he thought good for everything was good for nothing," and Manon found the path of duty rather tortuous, as well as steep and hard. Too sensitive and affectionate to follow reason calmly, too logical and reflective to abandon herself to feeling, she appeared inconsistent and capricious to a colder, more self-centred nature.

The long struggle between reason and instinct finally ended in the sad victory of the former. Manon hired a small apartment in the convent of the Congregation, and went back to live with her old schoolmistresses, the nuns (November 6, 1779).

Convents offered inexpensive and dignified retreats for women of small means who wished or were obliged to lead a simple life aside from, though not outside of, the world. Orphaned girls with slender dowers, reduced widows, decayed gentlewomen, took rooms in a religious house, where they received visits and entertained in a subdued way. Great ladies, who were other-worldly as well as worldly, retired to a nunnery for a retreat during Lent, or when in mourning. Sometimes romance crept into the cloister and the heroine

of a love-affair or a scandal was stealthily watched in chapel and garden by pupils and pensionnaires.

The hard and worldly Madame de Boismorel had mourned the gentle "Sage" in a fashionable convent, and Madame Récamier's receptions at the Abbaye au Bois are an example of the discreet yet animated social life that throve in semimonastic seclusion. This curious little world that mingled its gay chatter with the nuns' canticles, and the *chypre* of its *cassolettes* with the mystic fragrance of incense, was humorously and amiably sketched by Victor Hugo in Les Misérables. Even now the tourist seeking Lafayette's grave, or he who follows the trail of Jean Valjean on the dark chase from the Gorbeau House to the nunnery of the Petit Picpus, will find the modern counterparts of these ancient lady-boarders strolling in the old walled garden and chatting in the convent parlor.

The Congregation was a second home to Manon. There she literally fell into the arms of her devoted Sister Agathe, "the plaintive dove" of her school-days, and there, though lonely and sad, she enjoyed the tranquillity so lacking in the house on the Pont Neuf. Thrifty of her time and her money alike, Manon planned a rule of daily life after she had established her few penates "under her roof of snow," for she lodged very near heaven. Her expenses were calculated to a *sou*. She bought and prepared her own food, and Spartan fare it was—"beans, rice, and potatoes cooked with salt and butter" cost little money and small pains. She went out twice a week: once to visit her relatives, once to look after her father's wardrobe and household. She kept the early hours of

the convent. The morning, after making her own toilet and that of her apartment, she devoted to geography and the Italian language, studies that she hoped to teach later. Then she took up a favorite book "to rest her mind"—Jean Jacques, Montaigne, or Horace. The afternoon was given to needlework (when she could resist the temptation to read) and a walk in the convent garden. Under the great lime-trees, where she used to stroll with Sophie's arm around her waist, she loved to dream, to remember, and sometimes to weep. Music and a brief visit from Sister Agathe filled the short evenings. There were a few calls to receive and return from the boarders in the convent, visits from friends at the grating, and occasionally a little musical party in one of the cells.

Manon often spent whole days almost alone. "My taste for solitude is becoming a passion. In satisfying it I can think of you without distractions," she wrote the tepid Thales (December 4, 1779). The cessation of petty vexations and sordid anxieties lent her mental leisure to review the few joys of her brief betrothal, her bright visions of the future, now so dun and drab. Her young energy revolted against a passive acceptance of dreariness. She would not resign herself to a flat and flavorless existence. She would fight, work, deserve felicity, even if she never attained it. In the peace of the dove-cote her affection for Roland, long dominated by lacerated pride and the melancholy realization of how much he lacked of the ideal lover of her maiden fancies, deepened, and grew in tenderness and solemnity. In an atmosphere of consecration to an ideal, of little daily acts of self-sacrifice,

Manon, always impressionable, always vibratingly sensitive to any demand upon her, fell in love a second time. Thales, the philosopher, the impeccable wise man, was no more, and in his place in her heart was a weaker, erring, irritable person with some very infuriating characteristics, some disconcerting shortcomings, who in a mysterious way was more lovable than the sinless Sage of yesterday. To love him now that fate and Papa Phlipon had parted them forever seemed an act of devotion to Manon. Absence, which fires great passions and extinguishes little ones, also fosters illusions. Memory is a flattering painter when affection is at her elbow. Roland, unseen for many months, took on a different aspect; he never seemed more desirable than when he was inaccessible, and Manon was never so tender as when, apparently enfranchised by despair, she let herself go. She ceased to demand, and was content to bestow. Her letters, which had been explanatory or apologetic, but always sincere efforts to understand Roland's tactics, his wavering advances, and hasty retreats, changed in tone. To justifications and defenses succeeded idyls and elegies, confessions of love and longing. She frankly accepted the facts in the case. Her late suitor was not really separated from her by pecuniary embarrassments and social inequality, or even by the iniquity of M. Phlipon, but by his own lack of passion strong enough to burn away the barriers between them. He was not to blame; he loved her in the measure of his capacities, and she was content to be the generous lover who kisses—metaphorically. Her situation was in some respects a trying one for a high-spirited girl.

Her relatives considered her a victim of unrequited affection, abandoned by a cold and worldly lover. She accepted the *rôle* of Ariadne with perfect good temper and an utter absence of petty self-love. She had resigned herself to being misunderstood.

A friend (probably the same Madame Legrand who was one of Marie Antoinette's household) found Manon a place at court. The position was dependent on the whim of the Queen, and had been created for her amusement; it was, perhaps, that of *lectrice*, or reader. The young republican promptly refused it. The surprise and annoyance of her family and friends may be easily surmised. Fate was disciplining Manon as the gymnasiarch of Epictetus trained the young athlete, fortifying her weakness, augmenting her strength through blows and struggles. Unconsciously, out of anxiety and disappointment and disillusion, the girl was applying a principle, evolving a philosophy which is the protest of the mind against the incoherence and cruelty of life. Like the artist who seeks to impose law on the disorder of nature, she opposed a mental harmony to the discord of "an opaque, impenetrable, miscellaneous world." To essay the subjugation of fate to the sway of will and the intelligence compels reluctant admiration even when it discourages imitation, and predicates much self-esteem and self-reliance; indeed, she possessed both, but her self-esteem was mitigated by a sense of personal responsibility, and was yoked with an impassioned loyalty to ideals. If her attitude was more Olympian than Promethean, and, consequently, far less sympathetic in her Memoirs, in her letters the torments and the gnawing of the

insatiable bird were seldom absent. Those addressed to her timid and susceptible lover are frank capitulations. "Good-by, Pride." "Be thou man or illusion, I give myself up to the feelings you inspire in me that I foolishly believed I had repressed." "Come! Be forever under the name of friend all that thou canst be to the most tender and faithful heart." Safe behind the convent grating, reassured by distance and seclusion, Manon dared to woo as she would be wooed. Happy Roland! one exclaims in reading them, to receive such glowing missives! But Thales, whose blood was surely chilled by the water which the Greek philosopher whose name he borrowed conceived was the vital principle, replied lukewarmly, evasively, to these delicious yet maidenly effusions. To Roland the state of his liver was far more preoccupying than the condition of his heart, and he answered Manon's chaste sapphics with a description of his last bilious attack, enriched with realistic details, or with prudent advice to conciliate her relatives, as the only real joys of life are to be found among one's own people. All Roland's letters are full of reference to his business perplexities, and sometimes his lack of funds. He was suffering at once from weak health, poverty, and a severe disappointment. In December he was tempted to resign his post. He had lost the protection of Turgot; Godinot, his cousin and protector, had retired from the inspectorship of Rouen, and Roland fully expected to succeed him, but the position was given to a less able but more popular man. In addition to these causes of anxiety Roland was afraid of Manon, afraid of her empire over him, of her "tumultuous" tem-

perament, of her strong will and her independent character.

In spite of her professions, of the deference she had always shown him and his opinions, he divined the energy and persistence that underlay her apparent docility. He realized that she had managed her father, dominated her relatives, and mastered an insubordinate and passionate lover. These were not guaranties of passive obedience to a nervous, susceptible bachelor in delicate health. Then, too, in spite of his own scorn of restraints, Roland adhered to the conventions that his age and nation imposed on young girls, and Manon had emancipated herself from many of them. The bonds of custom galled Manon's high spirit; the vast opportunities that Paris offered her for study and culture tantalized her. In a rebellious mood she wrote Sophie: "Sometimes I am tempted to put on breeches and a hat to obtain freedom," and, again: "I ought to have been a Spartan or a Roman woman, or at least a Frenchman. Then I should have chosen for my country the republic of letters, or one of those republics where one can be a man, and obey only the laws. . . . Ah! Liberty, idol of strong souls, aliment of virtues, for me you are but a name!" (February 5, 1776). Manon had enfranchised herself to a certain degree. Even before the death of Mignonne she constantly went out alone to walk, to church, or to shop. Disguised as a servant seeking a situation, she had gone to the lodging of her father's mistress to confirm her suspicions of his misconduct. Humbly dressed like a girl of the people, she had visited the poor and found it a dangerous proceeding. During

her brief engagement, in spite of her affectionate protestations of submission, she had carried affairs with a high hand. Roland feared for his prestige. Could he maintain his superiority in daily contact with so much purpose? So he sought safety in flight and in avoiding contact with this invading personality. No, he could not visit Manon (as she suggested December 13, 1779). He should only pass through Paris, arriving late in the evening of the 28th of December; he expected to leave early the next morning to visit his brother, the Benedictine monk, at Longpont. He should not return to Paris until two weeks later. He was deeply affected by his disappointment and the conduct of those he thought were his friends; all things were awry with him; he feared that he was going to be very ill, but he cared little, he was tired of the wretchedness of this world, and was quite willing to do now what one must do some time, sooner or later.

Of course this wail afforded Manon an opportunity to play the *rôle*, very earnestly and sweetly, of consoler, and, of course, soon after Roland found himself in the nuns' bare little parlor before the grating, and behind it Manon, pale and tearful, "triumphed in her retreat," as the captive Roland sorrowfully acknowledged. She was so lonely and unhappy; she believed, or seemed to believe, that his family had arranged a marriage for him, and that he was hesitating as usual between his affection for her and his desire to satisfy them. "I need so much that you should be happy," she wrote him, the next day (January 20, 1780), that she could, like Regulus, beg him to ignore her own fate if his felicity required it. The next paragraph of her letter softens the sternness of her comparison:

"Evening is the most favorable time for us to see each other, even on Sundays."

Poor, prudent Roland! He struggled no more. He again offered his hand formally through his brother, Dom Pierre, and a few days afterwards (February 4, 1780) there was a quiet wedding at the church of Saint Barthélemy. The dear little Uncle Bimont was the officiating priest, and Sélincourt, Sophie's brother, one of the witnesses. The bridegroom, having finally decided to sacrifice himself, was no niggard victim. In his marriage contract he dowered his wife with six thousand francs, in order to swell her scanty portion to a respectable size, though his own affairs were far from prosperous.

Her courtship and marriage are laconically recounted in Madame Roland's Memoirs. "Nearly five years [in reality three] after I had made his acquaintance he [Roland] made me a declaration of love. *I was not indifferent to it, because I respected him more than any one I had ever known,* but I had noticed that both he and his family were not insensible to appearances. *I told him frankly that his suit honored me, and that I could consent with pleasure,* but that I did not believe that I was a good match for him. I then explained to him unreservedly our financial condition. We were ruined. I had saved, by asking for a settlement from my father at the risk of incurring his dislike, an annual income of five hundred *livres,* which, with my wardrobe, was all that was left of the apparent affluence in which I had been brought up. My father was young. His indiscretions might tempt him to make debts, which his inability to pay would render disgraceful. He might contract an unfortunate mar-

riage, and add to these evils children who would bear my name in wretched poverty, etc., etc. I was too proud to expose myself to the ill will of a family which would not feel honored by an alliance with me, or to depend on the generosity of a husband to whom I should bring only vexations. I advised M. Roland, as a third person would have done, and tried to dissuade him from thinking of me. He persisted; I was touched, *and consented that he should take the necessary steps with my father*, but as he [Roland] preferred to express himself in writing, it was settled that he should treat the matter by letter on his return home, and that during the remainder of his stay in Paris we should see each other daily. I considered him as the being to whom I should unite my fate, and I became attached to him. *As soon as he returned to Amiens he wrote my father to explain his plans and wishes.*

"My father found the letter dry. He did not like M. Roland's stiffness, and he did not care for a son-in-law who was a strict man, and whom he felt to be a censor. He answered with harshness and impertinence, and showed his reply to me after he had sent it. *I immediately formed a resolution.* I wrote to M. Roland that the event had justified only too well my fears in regard to my father, that I would not occasion him further mortifications, and that I begged him to abandon his project. I announced to my father what his conduct had obliged me to do. I added that after that he need not be surprised if I entered a new situation and retired to a convent. But as I knew he had some pressing debts, I left him the portion of plate that belonged to me to meet them.

I hired a little apartment in the convent of the Congregation, to which I retreated, firmly resolved to limit my wants by my means. I did so." A short description of her ascetic life follows. I take up the narrative where Roland enters it again. "M. Roland, astonished and grieved, continued to write to me like a man who had not ceased to love me, but who had been wounded by my father's conduct. He came at the end of five or six months, grew ardent when he saw me behind the grating [in the convent parlor], where, however, *I had kept a prosperous air.* He wished me to leave the cloister, offered his hand again to me, and urged me through his brother, the Benedictine monk, to accept it. *I reflected deeply on what I ought to do.* I did not hide from myself that a man less than forty-five years of age would not have waited several months to try to make me change my mind, and *I readily allowed that this had reduced my feelings to a degree which left nothing to spare for illusion.* I considered, on the other hand, that this persistence, also the result of reflection, assured me that I was appreciated, and that if he [Roland] had conquered his dread of the incidental annoyances, which marriage with me might occasion, I should be so much the more convinced of his esteem, which I need be at no pains to justify. Finally, if marriage was, as I believed it to be, a stringent bond, an association in which generally the wife takes charge of the happiness of two individuals, would it not be better for me to exercise my capacities and my courage in this honorable task than in the isolation in which I lived?"

CHAPTER X

DOMI MANSIT—EUDORA

MADAME ROLAND'S correspondence during the years that followed her marriage forms an almost comic contrast to that of her girlhood. One would hardly believe, looking over the letters of her early married life, that she possessed literary or intellectual interests. The large horizon of her youth narrowed to the walls of her house, her occupations to the copying and correction of Roland's manuscripts, the care of her baby, and the training of her servants. This correspondence, however, fills a lacuna in her biography, as the Memoirs pass very cursorily over this period of her life.

The Rolands spent the first year of their marriage in Paris. They took furnished rooms in the Hôtel de Lyon, in the rue Saint Jacques. Roland had been offered, and had accepted, a position in the government offices at Paris, to arrange a general recasting of the regulations that controlled the national manufactures. He strenuously opposed most of these regulations, for, in spite of a few concessions, they were as hostile to the interests of the producers, and the principles of free-trade and open competition, as the old ones had been. This work very naturally excited and depressed him. A more satisfactory task was the revision of his letters on travel, and the rearrangement for publication of the monographs on divers industrial and mechanical arts that he had already writ-

ten for the Academy of Sciences. These separate studies formed the preface to the great work, Le Dictionnaire des manufactures, undertaken the following year (January, 1781).

All these enterprises implied hard labor, into which Manon threw herself with the zeal of a neophyte, for the most practical and advantageous move that Roland ever made was his redoubted marriage. By it he acquired a devoted and indefatigable secretary, a careful and economical housekeeper, a cheerful and loyal companion, as well as an accomplished and worshipful young wife. She was Roland's amanuensis and proof-reader, and often his cook and nurse, for his digestion was wretched and he was constantly ailing.

No bride ever came to her husband more penetrated with the desire of self-sacrifice than did Manon, and none ever found more ample opportunity for its exercise. Roland was overworked, as usual, and he was daily exasperated by the frustration of his projects of reform. He was rigidly attached to his own opinions and intolerant of others' views; he was a stern taskmaster, exacting, meticulous, impatient; he was an illegible writer, and a prolix and voluminous annotator, without method in the arrangement of his notes. Yet his wife's devotion was unfaltering. Her humbleness and her patience were matched by her industry. She, who had spent her leisure in the best literary society of all time, now passed her days in copying and correcting articles on woollens, cotton velvet, and peat, with a seriousness and grave sense of responsibility that in later years she found amusing. "But it proceeded from the heart," she explains. "I revered

my husband so absolutely that I supposed he knew everything better than myself, and I so dreaded to see a cloud on his brow, and he was so set in his opinions, that it was not until long afterwards that I gained courage enough to contradict him."

The monotony of these tasks was relieved by a course of lectures on botany, given by Jussieu in the Jardin des Plantes. To an observer and a nature-lover like Manon, these conferences were a source of enduring pleasure, and in the following lonely years she made a good herbarium of the flora of Picardy. Through Jussieu the Rolands formed a friendship that lasted through their lives, and on his part long after their deaths, with Louis Bosc d'Antic, a member of the Academy of Sciences, and already known through his own researches, though he was but twenty-one in 1780. He was the son of a Huguenot physician and had inherited, with little else, his father's love of natural science, his disinterestedness, and the friendship of the *savants* who had been D'Antic's companions. Louis had a good position in the post-office (Secrétaire de l'Intendance des Postes), and devoted his few free hours to scientific study. Roland, then just beginning his Dictionnaire, became especially interested in this young scholar, who, knowing many people and many things, was so ready to serve his new friends. Bosc, unselfish and enthusiastic, was attracted and retained by the unique charm of Madame Roland, and the congenial pursuits of her husband. In Paris they saw each other daily, and when the Rolands went to Amiens their correspondence became "*presque journalière.*" Roland was always asking for a bit of in-

SO-CALLED PHYSIONOTRACE PROFILE OF MADAME ROLAND

From a colored engraving lately acquired by the Musée Carnavalet

formation, or the verification of a fact, and madame added a few lines at the beginning or end of a letter. Imperceptibly she came to monopolize the writing, and transmitted her husband's questions and messages. The Rolands' letters to each other were sent under cover to Bosc, even when they were of an intimate nature, partly because he could frank them, but also to keep him *au courant.* Perfect confidence and a close communion of ideas, the knowledge that the humdrum details of the *res angusta domi,* the little happenings of every-day life, would interest the absent friend, make of these letters a *journal intime* of Madame Roland's early wedded years. Bosc had succeeded to Sophie.

For poor Sophie had been gently dislodged from Manon's heart. Roland was a monopolist in his wife's affections. Sophie did not decamp without many struggles. The end of the long correspondence is rather melancholy reading. Manon's poor excuses for her silences, her references to her absorbing new duties and occupations, the exclusive nature of marital affection—*e tutte quante;* reasons which were no reasons, and which the exile met with arguments and reproaches.

After the banishment of the unfortunate female friend, Madame Roland's affections became virilized. Her correspondence was henceforward with men, with Bosc, Bancal des Issarts, Champagneux, Brissot, and her colleagues and comrades in political life. For several years Roland's duties took him much from home, and his wife's daily letters to him and her constant though often interrupted work on the Diction-

naire filled many hours daily. But there was always a spare half-hour for a few lines to Bosc, and he kept the Rolands in touch with the affairs of the capital.

Another less faithful friend who entered Madame Roland's life soon after her marriage was Doctor François Lanthenas. His father, a wealthy wax merchant, had obliged him, against his will, to enter business in Lyons. He had already travelled as an agent for silks and laces in Holland and Germany when he met Roland in Florence. Though Lanthenas was twenty years younger than the strict, elderly inspector, they became friends there, and looked forward to meeting again. Lanthenas returned from Italy, "ill, laden with books, engravings," an intense dislike for a shopkeeper's life, and a strong desire to study natural sciences. Perhaps his talks with Roland had confirmed these inclinations. Finally, after having demonstrated his incapacity for business, in 1780 Lanthenas obtained his father's permission to study medicine. He went to Paris and lodged in the Hôtel de Lyon, where the Rolands had been living for several months. Before long he was on a fraternal footing with them. Madame called him "*le petit frère*," and he addresses her as "*la sorella*." When the classical Roland takes up the pen the little brother is "*le fidèle Achate*," though sometimes more simply "*le compagnon*," or "*le camarade*."

Lanthenas, though timid and irresolute in practical matters, was audacious in theory, and given to mental speculation. Later one of the laws that transformed France, the abolition of the rights of primogeniture, was the result of his pamphlets and political

influence. The Revolutionist was still in the bud in 1780, but novelties attracted him. He considered seriously buying Mesmer's "Secret," as it was called, and becoming a thaumaturgist instead of a physician. But his interest in the newly discovered curative properties of electricity, and the immense vogue of "*le baquet de Mesmer*," did not prevent his attendance at the lectures on electricity, or those of the medical school. Through Bosc, whose cheerful activity stimulated his own rather intermittent diligence, Lanthenas entered a circle of students and *savants*. Here he met Parraud, the translator and disciple of Swedenborg, and became a follower of the Swedish mystic. From 1780 until 1792 his close friendship with the Rolands, and his rather touching dependence on them for mental sympathy and encouragement, kept them constantly together. Lanthenas's own family were uncongenial, his father was arbitrary, his elder brother tyrannical; both were thoroughly commercial in their ideas, and had a rich shopkeeper's contempt for the less lucrative professions. Roland's ideals and counsels, Madame Roland's vitality and enthusiasm, were a support and a spur to the rather melancholy student. Bosc and Lanthenas were equally devoted to the Rolands; Bosc disinterested and generous, because *they* needed him, Lanthenas introspective and hesitating, because *he* needed them. Bosc, like many spirited young men, overflowing with an excess of vitality, was a favorite in some more frivolous circles, while Lanthenas was inclined to be a recluse. With her new friends Madame Roland spent most of her restricted leisure. Her father had passed out of her

care, Sophie had faded into the background, the whole plan of her life had changed. This apparent shrivelling of interests and narrowing of affections is explained in one word—work. Madame Roland's energy was running a new course.

In September she visited her husband's family in Lyons, an event for sedentary Manon, who had flown no farther from her nest than Etampes. Warmly welcomed by her "new mother," who saw much company, and still loved the theatre and the opera, admired by Roland's brothers, Madame Roland saw everything in a purple light of enthusiasm; even dull little Villefranche was attractive, and at "Le Clos," in which later she was to spend her happiest years, "we abandoned ourselves like school-children to the delights of country life, seasoned with all that the union and intimacy of the sweetest ties can add to it." The redoubtable mother-in-law, the venerable Bessye, who had found the marriage of a Roland with an engraver's daughter decidedly *déplacé* at first, was viewed with partial eyes. Even Lyonnese society, which later Manon found to be so materialized and prejudiced, so crude and limited, in the first fine glow of feeling appeared only gay and hospitable.

After a two months' honeymoon with her new relatives, Manon returned to Paris and to new labors. On the last day of December Roland signed a contract with the publisher Panckoucke for the Dictionnaire des manufactures, arts et métiers. The author's rights were three francs a page (twenty-four *livres par feuille*); the work was published in parts; it was to have been in two volumes, which appeared duly in

1784–85, but the matter overflowed the mould, and in August, 1785, a contract was made for a third volume, treating skins and leathers, oils, soaps, and dyeing. The author's rights were tripled, a proof of the popularity of the preceding volumes, but the time and the minute research devoted to the articles must have made the undertaking a labor of love. It was not finished until 1792.

Full of digressions, overburdened with notes and corrections, this work covers a vast field, and is a monument to the disinterestedness and public spirit of Roland. To spread the knowledge of the technical processes of manufacture for the profit of all was his object. To attain it he spared nothing, and he incurred the hostility, even the active enmity, of the privileged manufacturers and their patrons. A timid man would have shrunk from such an undertaking, and only an enthusiast, sustained by a generous ideal, and voracious for work, would have carried it on to the end.

With all its imperfections, its lack of style, and its complicated method, the Dictionnaire was not unworthy of its forerunner, the Enyclopédie, which Panckoucke, who was the first of the great modern publishers, of the Hachettes and the Firmin-Didots, had previously published in a revised form. Roland's work was intended to supplement it and add to it the discoveries and inventions of the last few decades. Balked in the practical application of his progressive ideas, Roland found an opportunity to exploit them theoretically, in the Dictionnaire, and in one sense it is a biography, for in it his theories, his

struggles, his few triumphs, and his many defeats are recorded.

The final business arrangements made, the Rolands left Paris for Amiens, and madame—after a journey to Dieppe, where Roland's Lettres d'Italie were in press, and to Rouen, where she visited Roland's relatives and his old friends, the Demoiselles Malortie, the sisters of Cléobuline—settled down in a rather gloomy house adjoining the cemetery-cloister of Saint Denis, which she was to transform into the temple of Philemon and Baucis. This transformation, impeded rather than aided by two very inefficient servants, proceeded far more slowly than the one in the fable, but the big, rambling dwelling possessed one feature with which no house can be really dreary, a garden, in which madame worked joyfully, with the hope of flowers to come. When the books were unpacked and Roland's Italian engravings hung, and his collection of traveller's curiosities nicely placed, the stately old house, far too large for the little family, was warmed into homeliness. To enliven it still further, a *clavecin* was added—only a hired one, for it was not until much later that a *forte piano* was purchased "*with my savings*," wrote Madame Roland in her will. How well she played no one has mentioned, and it is hardly probable that one who spent so much time in other ways could have been a good performer, but there were plenty of pretty little twirligig tunes and many grand and simple melodies that an indifferent musician could play well enough to enjoy. In any case, madame loved music, though her *bourgeoise* mother had, fearing that she might become a professional,

never allowed her to devote herself to it exclusively. Then, of course, there were the Dictionnaire articles to be polished and corrected, translations to be made, and a large correspondence sustained relative to technical details and processes. The Dictionnaire was a real Danaid jar, and for twelve years it was patiently filled.

There were social duties, too, which, even when reduced to the minimum, ate up the working hours. "The women here are afraid of you," Roland wrote his wife from Amiens, and Sophie sent the same reassuring news to the rather shy young matron. Roland's friends seem to have been quickly propitiated. The attainments of a pretty woman, who blushes and hesitates in speech, are easily forgiven, and Madame Roland was welcomed by a coterie of cultivated people, old friends of her husband's. The De Brays, the De Chuignes, M. and Madame d'Eu, and M. de Vin, the *cicisbeo, en tout bien, en toute honneur* of Madame d'Eu, belonged to the *grande bourgeoisie* of Amiens. M. d'Eu was a collector of books and a student of science. M. de Vin was devoted to letters, and had founded the local academy, the Museum of Amiens; they lived close at hand and the Rolands saw them daily. The newcomer lacked neither sympathetic society nor visits. Madame was, however, very much occupied with preparations for another visit, which she expected in October (1781), and which proved a sad disappointment. She tried to soften the blow in a letter to Dom Roland, the head of the family:

"Well, well, my dear brother, it is only a girl, and I make you my very humble excuses. . . . Also, I

promise you that this little niece will love you so much that you will pardon her for putting her nose into a world where she has no business to come.

"With this assurance, and with a promise to do better in future, I hope that you will accord me full forgiveness, and I hasten to ask it of you, as I believe you to be really and truly sorry. I know that you consider this a bitter dose. I agree that your position is a hard one. I have made a full confession, so now do not let us speak more of it, only of the side issues."

The young mother felt that she had poorly requited the kindness of her new relatives. Only a girl when a boy was expected, a son for whom Roland was already seeking a restoration of the ancient title, that he might be born noble; to whom the head of the house, the *chanoine* Dominique, was ready to cede the domain and the clos, so that the hoped-for heir might be in truth, as well as in name, a Roland de la Platière. These celibate brothers with the pride of the old gentry and the nepotism of priests had counted so much on a boy, to keep the honorable old house alive and the family acres together. Ideas had changed in an awakening France, but feeling was still mediæval, and the eldest son occupied a position of authority and dignity in the home circle second only to that of the father.

Was the disappointment of the brothers shared by Madame Roland? Was she, like many women of strong will and virile mind, desirous to be the mother of men only, of sons who with larger opportunity and firmer purpose should translate her wishes into acts, her dreams into realities? The ladies of the Renais-

sance, who, despite their humanities, and their pictures and furniture, were very primitive persons (like their fathers and husbands), showed their disappointment on similar occasions with animal directness. Madame Roland, frankest of women, never breathed a regret that her "little chicken," her "*petite*," was not a boy, except in the playful letter to her brother-in-law. Indeed, the anxious, unquiet mama of Marie-Thérèse Eudora Roland was too constantly preoccupied in keeping her child alive to find a moment for any other considerations. Eudora had not inherited her mother's fine constitution, but even in her tenderest infancy manifested certain other less desirable inherited characteristics. She was as obstinate as her father, as headstrong as the little Manon had been. Eudora refused to grow, she declined to digest. She cried all night, and slept during the day, only in order to prevent others from enjoying repose at the proper time. She bullied her mother and terrorized her nurse; she was so incredibly greedy that Manon decided the story of Eve was not so stupid after all, and that gormandizing must have been the original sin. The baby's stomach was her deity, and while her mother had early in life chosen the heroes of Plutarch for her models of conduct, Eudora had apparently selected the Emperor Vitellius for her exemplar.

But this gluttonous, despotic mite of ailing flesh was the centre of Manon's universe. No madonna, more radiantly illumined by the ineffable tenderness within than by the golden light of her official aureole, ever bent over her divine charge in more absolute self-surrender. All her activities circled about this sick

child, and the stoic, who had elected reason for her guide, now abandoned herself quite unabashed to pure instinct. She was all mother; a passion of love and pity had submerged all other duties, all other claims.

Like many robust girls, Manon became a feeble and delicate parent. For many months her strength did not return, and she who had easily walked from the Pont Neuf to Vincennes could not cross her own room without falling from weakness. Invalidism was intolerable to her, for it condemned her to inaction. She was shaken by the terrors of the mother who looks on helpless while her child pines; she was tortured by jealousy of Eudora's nurse, of the *bonne*, in whose strong arms the baby was quieter and more content than in her own trembling ones. She had insisted on nursing her child against the advice of her physician, and in spite of Roland's remonstrances. Eudora seconded her by refusing to thrive except at her mother's expense, and prudent counsels were naturally unheeded by Manon with the thin, querulous wail of a hungry baby in her ear. Very slowly, with infinite patience and utter oblivion of self, Madame Roland built up the child's strength and restored her own. Her task was a difficult one; there were few "Parent's Guides" and "Mother's Assistants" to help and advise. Her only *vade mecum* was Madame de Reboul's Avis aux Mères. Medicine was in its heroic age, and busied itself little with the ills of women and children. Half of the infants born were expected to die, and they fulfilled expectations. Only the fittest survived the rough nursing of the peasant foster-

mothers to whom they were invariably confided. Manon got little aid from her doctor. "*La médecine est un art purement conjectural,*" she concluded sadly, after cross-examining him. Each case was practically a new experience and fresh matter for experiment. This decision encouraged her to do some experimentation for herself in diet and *régime*. Thanks to her initiative and her intelligence, the puny baby was truly born again to health and joy; Eudora was twice her mother's daughter.

Of course in this long struggle with death minor interests were forgotten. The Dictionnaire languished, and though for an hour or two in the twenty-four Manon remembered that she was a wife, and always wrote Roland a long letter daily during his frequent absences from home, it was sometimes almost illegible because Eudora insisted on remaining in her mother's lap. For the same reason all reading save in the smallest volumes was renounced; indeed, Eudora filled the whole arc of her existence so completely that when M. de Vin came in jubilant to announce the surrender of Yorktown, Manon, the ardent republican and former sympathizer with the high-spirited Americans, commented coolly: "I cannot conceive what interest a private individual can take in the affairs of kings who are not fighting for us!"

If the Citoyenne Roland had reread the letters of Madame de la Platière she would have winced and perhaps blushed at this sentence. What blinders ruthless Dame Nature claps on her wisest daughters when she uses them for her own purposes! Hypatia in the nursery, worried over an outbreak of measles,

would probably have received the news of the burning of the Alexandrian library with indifference. If the recently published letters to Roland are a record of obscure though unfaltering devotion, they are also from their very nature a chronicle of the smallest of beer. Manon herself characterizes them: "Here are nothing but accounts of drugs and meals; would you believe that you could have read them without disgust? How affection transforms and lends interest to the commonest subject!"

Roland's sudden descent from the altar and his abasement to a mere acolyte of the high priestess to the new divinity was something of a shock to him. It was difficult to sink instantly into insignificant fatherhood. Manon broke his fall with soft words: "*Adieu, ménage-toi bien; songe que ma fille ne me tient à la vie que par un petit fil, et que tu m'y attaches de tous les côtés, et choie ma santé dans la tienne.*" Disheartening lists of varied ills: smoky chimneys, indigestions, sick-room details, and the misdeeds of cooks and *bonnes*, who seem to have been unusually imperfect people, the prose of domestic life in fine, invariably ended with a tender message to hearten and comfort Roland as he splashed through the deep mud of dreary roads on his winter journeys.

With time Eudora grew less voracious and exacting and Manon more normal. She even went to the theatre *en loge grillée*, the cosey stage-box where if lazy or ill one went *en négligé*, with foot-warmer and work-bag, and where Manon wept over Mahomet and L'Orphelin de Chine—works that leave modern eyes quite dry. She attended church on Sundays, "to

freeze her feet for the edification of her neighbor." She paid a visit of congratulation to Madame d'Eu, and returned indignant to confide her ire to Roland. "Yesterday Madame d'Eu gave birth to a daughter; her husband is ashamed of it, and she is in a bad temper. I have never seen anything so grotesque. I went out this morning to see them. *Bon Dieu!* How strange it seems to me to find a newly made mother without her child. The poor baby sucked its fingers, and drank cow's milk in a room far away from its mother, while waiting for the mercenary being who is to nurse it. The father was in a great hurry to have the baptism over so as to send the little creature away to the village [of the foster-mother]. Now, my dear, it is not my fault, but I respect them both a little less since I have witnessed their indifference."

Sundays were Manon's holidays, spent in botanizing during the fine weather in the fields and ditches around Amiens, for with the return of health she resumed work on the Dictionnaire; it was difficult and dry, but as usual she idealized her drudgery, considering it as Roland's Apologia, and a means of bringing to the people useful and profitable knowledge that monopolists' greed had withheld. And Manon also looked forward to a pleasant harvest-time when at last she should have done with *Arts* and might give herself unreservedly to Letters; a pleasant Indian summer, *un été de la Saint Martin*, when Roland retired from his inspectorship on a well-earned pension, and the beneficent Dictionnaire finished, he and she should really act Philemon and Baucis. A vine-hung cottage like those Gessner described to ravished town-dwellers, a

little farm, a few friends, long, blissful days with poets and philosophers, with flowers and music—this was the mirage on which Manon fixed longing eyes while she toiled steadily through a desert of technical aridities.

CHAPTER XI

FROM AMIENS TO LYONS

With the design of realizing this ideal, the Rolands decided in the spring of 1784 to ask for letters of nobility and a retiring pension. The former demand was not as much out of character as appears at the first blush. When an heir was expected Dominique Roland, the head of the clan, had gathered the finest fruits of the family tree, and collected documentary evidence to prove the former nobility of his house during its prosperity. After reverses of fortune the Rolands ceased to bear arms that they were unable to gild; they now asked, therefore, merely for the restoration and the public acknowledgment of what they had once possessed. A list of their titles and honors signed and sealed by the nobility of Beaujolais and the *sénéchaussée* and municipality of Villefranche remains among the Roland family papers in the Bibliothèque Nationale in madame's handwriting.

Letters of nobility conferred practical rights and privileges, exemptions from taxes and many vexatious imposts, and insured a fixed social position. Inventors and manufacturers had recently been ennobled; for instance, Roland's adversary, Holker, and the father of the aeronaut Montgolfier. Roland leaned, also, on his personal merits, thirty years of service, and his writing and researches. Against him, however, were

his projected reforms, which disturbed monopolists and indolent holders of sinecures, his activity that set an uncomfortably high standard of comparison, his neglect of current courtesies, and his uncompromising frankness of speech, which had alarmed and offended the Intendants of Commerce. They presented an almost unbroken front of opposition to the advancement of a restless, uncivil agitator, as they considered Roland. To secure his letters of nobility a recommendation to the King from the Royal Council of Commerce was required. Trudaine, Roland's friend and protector, was dead, and Calonne, the new Contrôleur-général des finances (since April 3, 1783), was at the head of the Council; the good-will of the directors was, therefore, necessary to Roland's success, as the newly appointed Contrôleur would naturally be influenced by their opinions; and these directors, the Intendants of Commerce, were inimical to Roland. He had already experienced one check from them; the usual form of application for the title had already been followed and had failed, for Roland's papers had been submitted to the adversary of his reforms, and, as might have been expected, had not been heard from.

In order to avoid the Intendants, the Rolands decided to reverse the usual procedure, and apply directly to Calonne. If a letter from him approving Roland's request could be obtained before the Intendants were consulted, their opposition would come too late, and the affair would be put through by a *coup de main*. It was decided in the family council that Manon would be a more effective solicitor than Roland, so on March 18 she left Eudora in his care, and, accompa-

MADAME ROLAND

From a portrait drawing in the possession of her family

nied by the faithful successor of Mignonne, Marie Fleury, took the coach for Paris. She had engaged rooms at the Hôtel de Lyon, where she found herself among friends. Roland's brother, the Benedictine prior, met her there, lent her furniture, and looked after her comfort, and Lanthenas, who was studying medicine, and lodged on the floor above her, was delighted to run her errands and squire her about Paris. Bosc was a daily visitor, and gave her what time he could spare from his sick father. Her own father was evidently estranged from her, for Bonnemaman Phlipon died shortly before Manon's arrival in Paris (March 10), and she learned of her grandmother's death only through Sister Agathe. The manufacturer Flesselles, Roland's generous friend, who was in Paris to obtain a "privilege" from Calonne to introduce Arkwright's spinning-jenny in France, gave her advice and all the help in his power, Mademoiselle de la Belouze, Roland's cousin, introduced Manon to some people at court, the D'Arbouvilles, who promised assistance, and Manon began her campaign in kind company.

She commenced operations by putting her papers in order, unpacked her gowns, and engaged a hair-dresser. Mindful, also, of inevitable jading delays, and hours of enforced idleness, she hired a *claveçin*, and borrowed Clarissa Harlowe—not in the original, though she had studied English during the previous three years. She had also provided herself with some things more difficult to acquire than even a language—a meekness greater than that of Moses and a patience out-Jobing the Edomite's.

Her experience was recounted in daily letters to

Roland. They yield material for a comedy of manners, and afford a glimpse of public life and political administration that would be more diverting if we were sure that the methods it describes were obsolete. Manon's object was a personal interview with M. de Calonne, *le charmant roué*, as she and everybody in the world called him when they used no harsher term, but M. de Calonne was as inaccessible as the Grand Lama. The swift, simple course planned at home, which seemed feasible enough when they talked it over in Roland's study, proved almost impracticable; indeed, no honest and straightforward person, unaccustomed to court life, could realize beforehand the labyrinth of intrigue that surrounded the minister. He was the centre of a veritable maze of plots and schemes. Manon's task was to find a clew to guide her to him; instead, she soon discovered that she herself was enmeshed in a tangle of red tape. At the outset she was assured that to defy precedent was impossible; she must proceed in the old way and propitiate the Intendants. With the zeal of a recruit she resolved to try both methods and to knock at all doors, to renounce the title, if necessary, and solicit only the retiring pension. She "armed herself to the teeth with patience," and with her rare faculty of living in the present rather enjoyed playing the game and making the best of her hand, even if her cards were poor and fortune refractory. "*Me voilà donc tout-de-bon solliciteuse et intrigante; c'est un bien sot métier! Mais enfin je le fais, et point à demi, car autrement il serait fort inutile de s'en mêler.*"

Manon thrust her pride into her pocket, and waited patiently in antechambers, danced attendance at

early levees, ruined herself in carriage hire galloping to and from Versailles, and daily endured an elaborate hair-dressing—not the least of her trials. There was truly no royal road to preferment; instead, there were dingy back-stairs to climb, the underworld of lackeys and parasites to pass, constant demand for propitiatory offerings, and endless petty, mean trials for pride and patience. Manon determined at least to deserve success, swallowed slices of humble-pie without a grimace, and ignored the impertinences of porters and flunkies with cheerful serenity. The remembrance of Roland's thirty years of unflagging zeal in his country's service, his honest right to compensation for his life's work, sustained her in her daily efforts. Great people were hedged about with lesser people of awful dignity of mien, whose grandeur increased in direct ratio as their social importance diminished. It was mainly with this outer circumference of rank that Manon's business lay. She waited on the steward of this, the secretary of that, great personage; she made her courtesy to superannuated ladies-in-waiting and royal *femmes de chambre* with the same cheerful dignity that she maintained in face of obstacles and discouragement.

In truth, she was better off than her predecessors had been during the previous reign. Under Louis the Beloved favor-seekers sought the good graces of a lap-dog as the surest way to advancement. This dispenser of places and honors was the property of Julie, the petted maid of Madame de Grammont, the sister of the Duc de Choiseul, chief wire-puller of the puppet King of France. Julie held her court, or, rather, opened an office for the distribution of positions and

pensions in the entresol of the *hôtel*, where the dog was enthroned to receive homage. Verses were made to it, as well as more substantial offerings, for large issues hung on the wagging of its tail, and ambitious projects were quashed by a growl. The pampered pet and his mistress gave an emperor to France. How a shifty Italian pleased the dog and bribed Julie, who managed her mistress, who persuaded Choiseul, who impelled the King; how Genoa was betrayed, Corsica crushed, and finally ceded to France in time to make Napoleone Buonaparte a French citizen (August 15, 1769) is matter of history.

Manon at least had skipped one rung of the ladder, and begun with the human favorite. Kind M. de Flesselles knew Madame Elizabeth's *valet de chambre*, who perhaps could be persuaded to say a word for Manon to M. de Vaudreuil, who was all-powerful with M. de Calonne. The desired interview might be obtained if M. de Vaudreuil, who was the lover of Madame de Polignac, who was the favorite of the Queen, who was the patroness of M. de Calonne, could be induced by Madame Elizabeth's *valet de chambre*, instigated by M. de Flesselles, to recommend Roland.

It was a strange house-that-Jack-built, this government by favor. The rule of Marie Antoinette, which had succeeded to that of Madame du Barry, differed in no way from her predecessor's. It was characterized by the same absence of principles, the same ignorance of public affairs, the same lack of any sense of duty. The new *Reine Cotillon* was as frivolous and capricious as the older sovereign, and more extravagant and arbitrary. In 1784, when Manon began her

quest, M. de Vaudreuil was King of France, for if Marie Antoinette ruled Louis XVI, Madame de Polignac tyrannized over Marie Antoinette, and M. de Vaudreuil governed Madame de Polignac. He lorded it over his slave's slave, also, was intolerably insolent to the Queen, and once, when she opposed his will, shattered her pet billiard cue in a fit of rage. Maria Theresa's daughter bowed her regal neck to his yoke, for Madame de Polignac had tamed her spirit. Instances of her abasement abound; one may suffice here:

The minister of war, Montbarrey, had refused to lend money to Vaudreuil, who promptly demanded the minister's dismissal. The Queen hesitated; Montbarrey was the choice of Coigny, another of her favorites, whom she feared to offend. She ventured to resist, but Madame de Polignac had only to threaten to retire from court to bring the Queen literally to her knees, in a passion of tears and entreaties, begging pardon for her momentary rebellion. To prove her repentance, Marie Antoinette obeyed her despot more blindly than before, and appointed Vaudreuil's creature Ségur to the ministry. She knew nothing of Ségur, not even his name. "Be happy, my dear, *Puységur* is named," she announced triumphantly to her ruler (Besenval). The Queen's little mistake corrected, through Ségur the Polignac faction controlled the army, and through their protégé, Calonne, they disposed of the national finances. "*Il fallait un calculateur, on a nommé un danseur,*" laughed Figaro-Beaumarchais when this appointment was made. Folk less cheerful called the new minister a *panier percé*, and trembled to

see the public money in the hands of this prodigal. Calonne more than realized the expectations of the *camarilla* who surrounded the Queen, and the fears of the intelligent. He began by announcing that, unlike stingy Necker, he should constantly consider *private fortunes*. He had previously dissipated his own, and confessed to Machault: "The finances of France are in a deplorable condition. You may be sure that I should never have taken charge of them but for the bad state of my own." He had just begun his astonishing career in 1784, but had already borrowed a hundred millions, paid the princes' debts, and gorged with gold the faction to which he owed his power. "Is that all?" he asked a lady who brought him a draft for an enormous sum. In one year Calonne paid out in cash 136,000,000 *livres*, 21,000,000 on orders to the bearer.

Never had queen so obliging a paymaster. She kept him busy, for her many friendships flourished only under a golden shower. Her own privy purse had grown from 200,000 to 400,000 *livres*, but she was always penniless, for besides her enormous gaming debts and her passion for dress and diamonds, there were many favored ones besides Madame de Polignac. There were also Madame de Polignac's lover, child, husband, brothers, sister, sister's husband and lovers to be enriched. The jealousies of outgrown favorites were soothed only by an increase of their pensions; for instance, it cost a France that could not pay its soldiers, 150,000 *livres* to salve Madame de Lamballe's wounded feelings when supplanted by Madame de Polignac, though this poor invalid, a kind of doll-in-

waiting, was already receiving an annual income of 150,000 *livres* from the Treasury, because she had once pleased the Queen. But the river of gold flowing so bounteously into emblazoned coffers dwindled to a slender stream before it reached the workers of the Third Estate. Strict economy was practised only in the pay-rolls of those who served the nation.

It was not long before Manon's hopes of a retiring pension grew misty, and her new knowledge of the difficulties of the situation convinced her of the improbability of honest work finding an honorable recompense unassisted by antechamber influence. In an hour of discouragement she wrote to Roland. The result alarmed her. The proud, stoical man wept for the fatigue and humiliation she had borne for him, and was so ready to renounce the whole project that she was obliged to reassure him in order to continue her quest.

April 9, 1784.

"Why, my friend, it is *you* who are grieving and shedding tears! You who have a right to all the sweets of an industrious and honorable life, consecrated to the public good! *You* whom no one can deprive of your own approval, to which is joined that of the majority of the public, and a crowd of distinguished people! *You* who esteem so highly the joys of domestic life, and whom nobody in the world can prevent enjoying it! Can a few unjust men do away with so many causes of happiness? Come to my heart with our Eudora; let us forget despicable people. Our love, our mutual trust, and peace, are they not enough for our happiness, with a corner of the earth to which

we can retire? Come, if you can conquer the indignation and bitterness caused by baseness and injustice; if you can free yourself from labors that distress me by their effect on you. I ask no more to be happy . . . the thought of your sadness is unbearable to me. Take better care of our common happiness that you hold in your hands. Take courage, let us do everything that is possible, and give up the rest. . . . Finally, my dear, if we are not made to be happy in spite of the devil, never human beings were made to be so. Take good care of your health; as for me, I laugh at everything else. I kiss you on both eyes. I beseech you to be more tranquil; play with our baby while you think of her mother, and then see if you still can be sad. At least it would not be wise to be so. Write to me with another ink, or I shall start for home at once, and no longer waste my life thus away from you; it is this only that really grieves me. But write me from your heart. I mean to say that I do not wish a change only in outward signs, but in your feelings. I embrace you without being able to tear myself from your arms, to which I burn to fly. Adieu."

Meanwhile, all the old practitioners in the business of favor-seeking, from Madame Adelaide's *femme de chambre* to the *abbé galant*, who knew the court better than the church, convinced Manon that her only chance of success lay in abandoning her short cut to honors and returning to the beaten track. The Intendants' recommendation *must* be obtained before any one, even the most unimportant official, would consider her claims. Manon, stifling her misgivings,

changed her tactics, and abandoning the hope of an interview with Calonne as too romantic for realization, at once began the siege of the Intendants. Roland's most violent opponent was Tolozan; Blondel and Montaran took their cue from him, and it was with some trepidation that Madame Roland made him her first visit. She sent an account of it to her husband directly afterwards.

Monday Evening, April 19th, 1784.

"I received last evening notice of a rendez-vous to-day between ten and eleven o'clock. I have seen the bear. I have cut his claws a little but he growled a good deal. He has promised to help me. I could not promise myself more. Now that I have satisfied your impatience in telling you the result, I am going to amuse you by the details.

"When I went into Tolozan's study he was in his night-cap; rising with a nod and a sullen air, without looking at me, he showed me the armchair that was waiting for me. I began by thanking him for the time he gave me in the midst of his occupations, etc. A 'What's it about?' said impatiently warned me to cut my courtesies short. I was determined not to be confused. I answered very quietly that I came to explain your situation and your wishes; that I came to him because his sagacity, as well as his equity in business, were equally well known. From him I expected the justness of views and the decision that should be authoritative; that for thirty years you had sufficiently demonstrated your zeal, your talents, etc. But hardly had I begun to blow your trumpet when

he rose and with singular fire [said]: 'Take care not to represent him to us as a superior man! That is his pretension, but we are far from considering him one!' From there on I had to stand an outburst, but an outburst of which it is not possible to give you an idea."

Roland was accused of pedantry, unbearable pride, greed of glory, pretensions of all kinds; he was a perpetual contradictor, a bad writer, a bad politician, aspiring to rule everything, incapable of subordination, etc., etc. Manon replied that these reproaches simply amounted to a demonstration that the Intendants had been piqued by the energy of an enlightened man whose opinions were all of them the result of toil and experience, who believed it his duty to tell the truth at any cost, and who expressed himself forcibly; but that, on one side, they, the Rolands, could offer much actual work and useful suggestions, and, on the other side, they could not present a single fact in proof of so many vague accusations. Tolozan answered that, as to Roland's writings, many inspectors have furnished memoirs which were considered quite as important.

"We fought long and hard; it is impossible to write all these pettinesses. To sum up: you are a good inspector, nothing more; an honorable man with talent, but you must be in the first place." M. de Tolozan feared, also, that if Roland was accorded a title all the other inspectors would solicit one.

"But," replied Madame Roland, "all have not the same rights to it; a noble family and published works." She tried to make Tolozan distinguish between the actual inspectorship and the writings and reforms

which Roland had added to its duties. "But then if you separate these things it will be as a literary man [that Roland will be ennobled]." "Have letters of nobility ever been given to a man of letters?" asked Tolozan scornfully. "Why not?" replied Manon intrepidly; "they are given to a paper-seller who made a balloon." "My *vilain* laughed like a grimacing monkey. In the end he personally greatly desired that inspectors generally might aspire to this distinction, and that you especially might attain it. Finally, he advised me to see these gentlemen [the other Intendants]. He added that I [Manon] serve you very well; it is a pleasure to hear me. He praised my enthusiasm that honors me. 'No, monsieur, it honors my husband. If it is true that there is no hero for his *valet de chambre*, it is rather strange that this man whom you blame for a disposition that makes you forget his talents, his work, and his zeal should be to his wife in every respect the most distinguished and venerable of beings.' The bear answered me rather wittily, but I will tell you all that another day. . . . I believe that I have seen the crossest of them; it is not possible that the others can say anything worse; he meantime warned me that M. B[londel] would say as much to me, and M. M[ontaran] a little more."

Blondel and Montaran proved gentler and far more courteous, but Manon preferred the honest roughness of M. de Tolozan to their quiet opposition. "Would you believe that he who shouted at me inspires me with more confidence than the others who were civil to me, and who did not seem frank? Under his brusqueness there is the openness of which he is proud.

He may act in our favor because he is as deeply persuaded of the good that he admits as of the evil that he reproaches you with. I remember that M. Montaran, modifying what I recalled to him of his letter, said it meant only that you were made for the first place, and were not suited to your own. To M. Blondel, who made so many observations to me on the necessity of yielding to circumstances, of respecting conventions in order not to offend any one, etc., I answered that I knew very well that in society, as on the stage, the *savoir vivre* of Philinte was considered more agreeable than the virtue of Alceste [Le Misanthrope of Molière], but that no one had ever thought that the latter deserved to be punished for his austerity, and you were for yours." (April 24.)

Manon, in spite of her admiration for Alceste-Roland's inflexibility, adroitly profited by the criticisms of the Intendants to preach mildness and courtesy to him, and to point out his shortcomings. "Finally, all that I can tell you is that if you are careful about your correspondence, if you are more gentle, or if you will let me do it for only six months, at the end of that time a general inspectorship will be due, and I wish to have it. But, above everything, as I said to you before leaving, do not get angry in your letters, or else let me see them before you send them. You must not offend these people. Your pride is known well enough, now show them your good nature. . . . *Mon bon ami*, these people are not so bad. They were ruffled, and the dryness of your style [of writing] has done all the harm, making them believe that you had a terrible disposition and intolerable pretensions. I

assure you that they [the Intendants] can be managed."

They could be by one who wore her thirty years as lightly as though they were twenty odd, and whose voice was mellow and tunable enough to plead a far worse cause with some measure of success. Reasonable, patient, always ready with a reply or an explanation, candid almost to indiscretion, her "sweetness and gentle breeding" advanced Roland's suit more effectually than his essay on "Sheep" or his improvements in the manufacture of cotton velvet. "*Elle est étonnante*" was the general verdict; still, even Manon's eyes and arguments could not turn the tide of favor or arrest the movement of the political machine. A few visits to the Intendants, several answers to her searching questions, assured her that more money and more influence than she could command were essential to success.

By mid-May, disappointed but not discouraged, she had decided to give up the title and go back to Amiens, returning later to Paris to ask for a retiring pension at a more favorable moment. She had already begun a round of farewell visits, when M. Montaran's secretary gave her some news that revived her hopes. Her first battle was lost, but there was time to win another.

A protégé of the Duc de Liancourt, Lazowsky, had succeeded in pleasing Calonne, who had just made a place for him. Lazowsky had asked for a general inspectorship. It is perhaps superfluous to add that he possessed no training and no capacity for so important a position; these considerations would not have stood in his way, but, unfortunately, there was

no place of the kind vacant. Therefore, an ambulant inspectorship was invented for him, with an annual salary of eight thousand *livres;* to earn it he was to travel eight months of the year in the provinces and spend four in Paris. In order to justify the appointment of an unknown and inexperienced man to such a responsible office, three other similar inspectors were named, who would become general inspectors when vacancies occurred, an arrangement which lent the appointment a businesslike air and screened the favorite behind the real workers. This general change in office left the post at Lyons vacant, and Manon instantly decided to ask for it. The city was more important than Amiens, the salary larger, the duties less arduous, and Roland's home was near, where summers and vacations could be passed. She had no time to consult her husband; she must act at once, or the place would be filled. She found the inspectors willing after they had denied so much to grant a little, and she moved with so much despatch that by May 22 she wrote to Roland: "Well, my friend, the business is done; we shall go to Lyons." There remained only a few details to settle, and a few good-bys to say, among them a last visit to M. de Tolozan. The "bear" was then quite tamed; he gave Manon no end of good advice about "tempering" Roland's asperities, and promised her his help "in all her ambitions," adding in a tone of real feeling: "This is not a compliment to a woman that I am making you, but a tribute that I love to pay to your sweetness and honesty." This effusion from one usually so gruff brought the quick tears to Manon's eyes; and the bear's were not dry

when they parted after many promises of future service on his part.

Manon's mission was over, and she ended it appropriately by a pilgrimage to Rousseau's tomb at Ermenonville. Her time in Paris had not all been filled with business. She had seen the Duke of Orleans gallery (*chose délicieuse que je verrais et reverrais bien des fois*); she had heard Salieri's Danaïdes, that she, like everybody else, ascribed to Glück. Of The Marriage of Figaro, which she finally succeeded in seeing (May 14), after many attempts, she wrote, before they were successful: "It is a poor piece, full of improprieties, they tell me," and again: "As to Figaro, I must hurry; they want to make it fail by spreading a report that the Queen said she should not go to see it because the piece was indecent, and soon it will be the fashion for many women not to go. At least, that is what Mlle. de la B[elouze] and certain people believe. The first time it is given I shall try not to miss it." There is no record of her own impressions of the most brilliant comedy ever written, more's the pity.

Like every *provinciale* in Paris, Manon bought herself a new hat, and shopped for Eudora, but she spent more time with Panckoucke, Roland's editor, than with her hair-dresser, and bought more books than finery. Lavater's work, which she coveted, was too dear at six louis for her flattened purse. Mesmer and his tub interested her, for she hoped that the electrical treatment would benefit Roland; it was the cure-all of the moment, and there were clubs all over France to study it, though the faculty regarded Mesmer as it does the modern osteopath.

The death of Bosc's father saddened her stay in Paris, and for many days interrupted her place-seeking. She squeezed a few piano lessons into her busy hours, and spent one evening at a concert of sacred music, where in a box adjoining hers she saw La Blancherie. She looked upon this idol of her youth with a convert's indifference to his late gods. La Blancherie did not appear to recognize her. Truly, a tame finish to a first fond adventure.

The Rolands made a short visit to England before going to Lyons. On July 1, accompanied by M. de Vin and Lanthenas, they left Amiens. Manon made short notes during her English trip, which lasted only three weeks. She was delighted with everything in what to her was the land of freedom, and observed everywhere the beneficent effects of the English constitution. Her remarks show a very practical tendency, which was due, no doubt, to her guide, Roland. The fat sheep, the huge turnips, the deep, mossy turf pleased her almost as much as the brilliant bloom and virginal air of English maidens, in whom she recognized the models for Clarissa and Pamela.

She wrote of them to Bosc: "Truly, I should like to see you in England; you would be in love with all the women; I, a female, was *almost*. These do not resemble ours at all, and generally have that shape of the face prized by Lavater. I am not astonished that a man of feeling who knows English women has a vocation for Pennsylvania. *Allez*, believe me, any one who does not esteem the English men, and feel a tender interest mingled with admiration for their women, is a coward or a thoughtless fellow, or an ignorant

fool who speaks without knowing what he is talking about."

The popularity of good plays, the theatres filled with audiences of poor people who were appreciative and more enthusiastic than the fine folk in the boxes, surprised and interested her. She tasted English hospitality: Roland's profession had brought him into relation with manufacturers and men of affairs, who welcomed a Frenchman of a type little known to most foreigners, *le Français sérieux*, whose acquirements were of that solid and practical kind so much appreciated in England. In fine, it was a rose-hued view of perfidious Albion that Madame Roland brought back to France.

The last few days in Amiens were saddened by a misunderstanding with Sophie's husband, but this was the only shadow on a sunny outlook, for when the last cases were corded, the last trunk closed, the Roland family, *bonne*, baby, bundles, and all, set out for a round of farewell visits to relatives and friends (August 23). They travelled in their own cabriolet, and experienced the usual vicissitudes of wayfarers, the wettings and breakdowns that supplied our forefathers' journeys with picturesque incident. They stopped at Rouen, Dieppe, Paris, Longpont, and Dijon, on their devious way to Villefranche, where they stayed but a day, and then hurried on to the Clos to rest and enjoy the vintage festival (October 3).

CHAPTER XII

LE CLOS, VILLEFRANCHE, AND LYONS

THE Clos de la Platière, where Manon lived an ideal country life for several happy years (1786–91), is still in the possession of her great-granddaughter, Mme. Marillier, though it has recently been offered for sale. The passing of a century and a quarter had brought few changes when I visited the Clos, some years ago, and the drawing made by the Rolands' friend Albert Gosse, in 1786, differs little from the modern photographs of the house and garden.

The Clos, as the whole estate, vineyards, farm, and buildings is called, is situated in the commune of Théizé, ten kilometres from Villefranche on the Saône. I drove one pleasant morning in early June on the same winding, climbing road that the Rolands' cabriolet followed more than a hundred years ago. This road, firm and hard as marble, led from the dull little town along the edge of a valley. Spring had clothed the meadows with a royal mantle of living green, powdered with purple blossoms of mint and regal fleur-de-lis, but the low, steep hills thriftily divided among many hands into numberless small fields wore a coat of shreds and patches. They were not so highly cultivated in Madame Roland's time, and the forests had not fallen back before the all-conquering vine.

We soon ceased to skirt the valley, and began to climb the foot-hills of the Beaujolais range. As we rose, a broad, billowing expanse of country rolling upward towards distant heights was revealed, a country sober in contour, rich in color. The sharp curves of the hillsides, vine-clad to their summits, lent variety to the landscape, but it was grave and glowing rather than picturesque or romantic. The warm, mellow tone of the whole region is due to the color of the stone universally used for building material, and of the soil that seems to be this same stone pulverized.

The earth is a rich red, the stone when freshly quarried a brilliant ochre, toning with age to terra-cotta, russet, and finally, through half a dozen intermediate tints, to a delicate grayish purple, as though the Lyonnais, proud of its antiquity, cherishing its classical heritage, still wrapped itself in the rags of its Roman mantle. More recent memories are not lacking. The countryside is closely populated, and the villages, built of large square stones, follow one another like the beads of a broken necklace. A great deal of living has been done, much history has been made in these uplands, and each hamlet shows a tower, a church, or a shrine. There are more towers, rising strong and dark, on distant heights, built in that Romanesque style that seems so naturally the sturdy successor of the Roman; indeed, the whole landscape has something of Roman dignity and restraint.

As we toiled upward the vineyards climbed with us, all light-soaked, warmest golden green as the sun slanted through them, and turned the groves of oak to spots of cool color and the rare hay-fields to pale,

pearly gray. The vines have routed the trees, save these stout oaks, invaded the gardens, and taken possession of the soil, crowding out the grain and pasture-lands that the Rolands saw in their many journeys to and from Le Clos. We passed long files of heavy wagons, laden with wine-casks, and teams of beautiful white oxen with padded foreheads as we climbed to the hamlet of Théizé.

It clung to its mountain ridge, a pinky-yellow mass of houses, a château shorn of its tower, and a little chapel. Well below it in a dip of the hill nestled a tiny burg; at the end of its only street rose a high, yellow wall and a lofty gate guarded by chestnut-trees, which might have been the entrance to a convent or a barracks. This was Le Clos, truly well named.

Beyond the gate lay a grassy court, surrounded by stone outbuildings—grange, barn, the *utile* of a country-seat; on the other side of the house stretched the *dulce*, an English garden, enclosed on two sides by a broad stone terrace, with orange and lemon trees in tubs. To the right, beyond the garden, lay the orchard and vineyard; to the left, on the other side of a narrow lane, the kitchen-garden. The trees, chestnuts and sycamores, with a solemn hemlock here and there, are newcomers since Manon's time, but the flowering shrubs and lilacs, and the long hedge of the strange, striped Provence roses, which made the sweet June air sweeter, were hers, and close at hand in the vegetable-garden were the descendants of those artichokes and fruits that she besought Bosc to help her save from beetles and caterpillars. From the lower terrace she

must have looked down over a vast expanse of country that has hardly changed in aspect since Louis XVI was king. Some towers have been razed, some villas and châteaux added, and the vines have swept all before them. But the streamlet of Beauvallon runs, a slender thread of silver, at the foot of the hillside, the chapel of Saint Hippolite, the château of Brossette, hold their old place in the wide prospect that is humanized, as are the landscapes of the Old World, by tradition and association. Manon's dark-locked, white-robed figure is only one of a procession that memory marshals here, where Roman legionary and Saracen invader and Louis XIV poet follow each other, Boileau as near Manon in point of time when she looked across the wall down into the valley as she is to us to-day. Her shade should walk in the garden, for she loved it; the flowers and fruit were her special care, and the evenings of busy days were often spent strolling on the terrace to breathe the sweet-scented air. Sometimes, in rare, perfect hours, when the air was crystal-clear, there floated into her charmed sight a wonderful iridescent mountain peak, the glittering crest of Mont Blanc rising in the east above the clouds like a fata morgana. The day I spent at the Clos was warm, a light mist veiled even the distant ranges of the Beaujolais, and naturally the "Cat Mountain," as the peasants prosaically call the "dread and silent mount," remained invisible.

The exterior of the Roland house, built in the beginning of the eighteenth century, of the usual type—a main building (*corps de bâtiment*) flanked by a pavilion at either end and roofed with red tiles—has remained

unchanged. Few alterations have been made in the commodious, airy rooms; Madame Roland's chamber, with its heavily beamed ceiling, and its wide view from the small-paned, low windows, has never been rearranged, and one room is still called "*la chambre de Lanthenas.*"

Many things remain that have known the touch of vanished hands—the brass wall-fountain in the dining-room, the canon's silver crucifix, long buried in the garden, and disinterred only when the revolutionary storm had abated; books with Roland's name in them, arms collected by him in the billiard-room, and his bust by Chinard. There are few family portraits; Madame Roland's are at La Rosière, the La Tour pastels of M. and Mme. Phlipon have been sent to the museum in Lyons. There remain only an oil-painting of the canon and a lovely head of an unknown woman.

The tempest of the Terror swept through this quiet place, dispersing its modest treasures. Though the wax seals of the revolutionary emissaries are still shown on some of the doors, they did not protect the property from pillage by the people whom the owners had nursed and taught. The house was looted, and the furniture was carried off by the peasants. "It came from the Clos" was the explanation offered to account for any unusual luxury in the neighboring cottages. Years after the Terror the *curé* of Théizé returned to Eudora Roland's husband a sum of money intrusted to him by a penitent who in his youth had robbed Le Clos.

Manon's happiest days were spent at La Platière.

Her country life was as full of duties as of dreams; there was constant occupation, even hard work, indoors and out, and those enchanting evening hours among the roses on the terrace were the crown of her labors. "In the country," she wrote Bosc, "I forgive everything. When you know I am there you are permitted to show just what you are while you are writing; you may be eccentric, you may preach to me, you may be gruff, if you like. I have plenty of indulgence, and my friendship tolerates every mood and harmonizes with every tone."

Perhaps one reason for this gay good humor was that in the country Manon was mistress of her own household, for the grumbling mother-in-law remained in Villefranche, and, after shilly-shallying for several years, Dominique, the eldest brother, ceded the Clos to the Rolands. The letters to Bosc and to her husband during Manon's long *villeggiatura* express her lively interest and active participation in country pursuits and pleasures. With her wonted energy she gave herself to her new vocation of lady-farmer, and applied her intelligence to the practical details of rural life. Here she also realized her ideal, the love in a cottage that Rousseau had pictured so winningly. Indeed, she never seemed so unconscious, so spontaneously joyous, as during those long, sweet summers at Le Clos. She had always *loved* nature; there she *studied* nature. The wonder and delight, the "delicious tears," the exaltation of her girlhood in the forest of Meudon returned to her. But, as always with Manon, action accompanied emotion. A keen observer and a seeker for causes, her studies in botany and natural history

were revived and applied to her garden and orchard; Rousseau made way for Linnæus. Bosc was her mentor, and her letters to him were filled with questions that give us a high opinion of the diversity and extent of his knowledge, and the letters are not all those of an amateur agriculturist. They are the blithest Manon ever penned; sometimes they are as frolicsome as though she had dipped her quill in the foam of the must:

"*Eh! Bonjour donc, notre ami!* It is a long time since I wrote to you, but it is almost a month since I have touched a pen. I am imbibing some of the tastes of the beast whose milk is restoring my health. I am growing dreadfully asinine, and busy myself with all the little cares of piggish country life. I am preserving pears, which will be delicious, we are drying grapes and plums, we are bleaching and making up linen. We lunch on white wine, and then lie on the grass to sleep ourselves sober; we work at the vintage, and rest after it in the woods or in the fields. We are shaking down the nuts; we have gathered all the fruits for winter, and have spread them out in the attics. . . . We make the Doctor (Lanthenas) work, Heaven knows. Good-by, we must breakfast and afterwards go in a crowd to gather almonds.

"*Salut, santé et amitié pardessus tout.*" (October 12, 1787.)

"Hang thyself, greedy Crillon! We are making preserves and mulled wine, *résinet* (sic), dried pears, and bonbons, and *you* are not here to taste them! Such are my occupations at present, my elegant friend, and meantime we are busy with the vintage." (October 1, 1788.)

Even after the tocsin of the Revolution had roused an echo in Manon's heart, nature, springtime, the vernal landscape charmed her to forgetfulness of public affairs.

"A truce to politics! . . . The weather is delicious; in six days the country has changed so that it is unrecognizable: the vines and the walnut-trees were as black as they are in winter; the waving of a magic wand could not have changed the aspect of everything more completely than has the warmth of a few fine days; everything is growing green and bursting into leaf. . . . I would willingly forget public affairs and human discussions, contented to put my house in order and watch my hens lay, and to care for our rabbits. I wish to think no more of the revolutions of empires." (May 17, 1790.)

There was justification for Manon's enthusiasm. Toil in field and vineyard had kept something of antique Virgilian grace. The vintage was hardly changed since its first-fruits were hung on Liber's altar. Discipline was relaxed, and the workers drank freely of the new wine, even the babies revelled in the must, and tumbled and sprawled like the abandoned infants of a carven bacchanal. The great white oxen, with their fragrant burdens and vine-crowned heads, the splashed peasants bending under the big baskets of grapes, the purple-stained casks foaming over on to the wine-soaked earth, would not have been unfamiliar to an old Roman ghost revisiting his farm.

Like all good housewives, Manon shared the arduous delights of *une grande lessive*, when an acre of grass disappeared under home-spun linen drying and bleaching

under a noonday sun, and the huge sheets flapped like sails on their lines; when down at the brook-side the washerwomen pounded and soaped and rinsed to an animated accompaniment of gossip and laughter. Later, basketful after basketful, overflowing with snowy masses of linen, was carried up to the press-room, counted and carefully laid away in trim piles, between sprigs of vervain and lavender, for the châtelaine knew her napkins by heart, and called each sheet by name. It was a sweet, wholesome task, not unfit for gentle ladies; even to-day Nausicaä does not seem very far away from a *grande lessive* in the South.

On Ascension Day fell the local *fête* or the Vogue of Théizé, when peasants from all over the countryside gathered at the Clos for a merrymaking. This May festival is probably a survival of some pagan holiday when the sacrificial *far* or wheat-cake was borne in a solemn progress through the fields and gardens, for the principal ceremony of the Vogue is still the carrying of a huge *brioche* around the premises in a dignified procession, "*musique en tête*," fifes, violins, and bagpipes; afterwards, in reverent silence, the *brioche* is cut and distributed by the chief of the Vogue, and the dancing begins. The *fête* lasts two days, and is still held at Le Clos, Madame Roland's great-granddaughter presiding over it.

But it was not only for a merrymaking that the country folk came to the manor; its mistress, like the châtelaine of the castle, was the physician, often the nurse, of the peasants. She dispensed *tisanes* and poultices and simple drugs, she took long rides on horseback to visit the sick, she was the Lady Bountiful

of Théizé and Boitier. In prison one of her sweetest memories was the confidence and gratitude of the people she had helped and nursed. "They loved me, and my absence was mourned with tears."

There were guests, too, at Le Clos, and an easy, informal hospitality. These guests were generally men. Lanthenas was a constant visitor, and Bancal des Issarts was at home there. Many of the Rolands' friends were Protestants; all were serious-minded, with cultivated tastes; inventors, pastors, scientists, most of them interesting, some of them famous. Though there were few women among her visitors, Manon promised Bosc, if he could find time to give her, "the society of an Italian lady [Madame Chevandier], full of spirit, grace, and talent," and "the company of a German lady [Madame Braun, a Protestant of Mulhouse] who was naturally of a sweet disposition, rather strict in her conduct, which was formed by republican standards; simple in her manners, who united rare goodness to an uncommon degree of learning." To the house-parties were added the petty nobility and the churchmen of the neighborhood. There were few luxuries at Le Clos, but the guests enjoyed "perfect liberty, wholesome food, excellent water, tolerable wine, walks and rides, long chats, and diverting readings."

Le Clos was Eudora's paradise. There she played in the garden, gathered flowers, "herself their elder sister," as her mother wrote, hung about the barn, and even picked up an oath or two when the vigilant maternal eye was off her. She was a mystery and a trial to her mother; an "elf," even a "demon" at times, obstinate, indifferent, lazy, and capricious. Re-

proofs, suppers of dry bread, whippings, even solemn sermons from an absent father, were of no avail. "This Papa who scolds all the time, *ça m'ennuie*," she replied to paternal remonstrances. Headstrong Roland and self-willed Manon were amazed at their offspring's wilfulness. To Manon she seemed a changeling at times, for Eudora shirked study and was averse to any mental effort. Her character, her tastes, or lack of them, were incomprehensible to her mother, who remembered her own studious, docile childhood. Insistence on inherited tendencies was not familiar to philosophers then, and she failed to take Eudora's grandparents into account. She forgot the frivolous Grandmama Roland, greedy, exacting, and fond of excitement, and Papa Phlipon, dissipated and pleasure-loving, in her wonder over her little girl's strange character. There is rather a pathetic glimpse of Eudora's babyhood in one of her mother's letters, that may partly explain the little one's dislike of books: "In a study, between two desks, where close application exacts perfect quiet, it is natural that a child should be bored, above all, if while she is forbidden to sing, or to chatter to herself, or to speak to us, she is obliged to learn certain tasks that require attention" (December 1, 1787). Poor little butterfly, fluttering "between two desks" in the dust of a library. Was it astonishing that always associating books with enforced silence and immobility, a playful and active young creature grew to dislike them?

Apparently, Eudora was a robust, pretty child, passionately devoted to her mother, indolent and overfond of play, but truthful and fearless. She must

have had a fine constitution to resist the boluses and bitter drafts which her apprehensive parent constantly administered to her, and naturally, like all healthy young animals, preferred frolics to studies. She loved to dance and to draw, to sing and to sew, to use her hands and feet instead of her head. Though she was perverse, she adored her mother and reverenced her father. In fine, a roguish, affectionate, brave little romp, who would have more than satisfied many mothers, and to-day would have been the pride of a kindergarten. Madame Roland acknowledged rather sadly that, if she could have given all her time to Eudora's education, the child's indifference and lack of industry might have been overcome, but Manon was a wife before she was a mother, and Roland's claims upon her time came first. Rousseau, reverently consulted, for once yielded no message for his disciple (December 1, 1787). In his educational scheme parents had no occupations or duties in life other than the care and training of their offspring. This was an impossible ideal for Manon, scribe and house-mistress, to strive for; she resolved, however, never to lose her temper with the little tease, to punish her impersonally and judicially when punishment, alas, was necessary, and above all to try to make Eudora happier with her parents than with any one else. She succeeded admirably in becoming her daughter's best friend and confidant, and her most amusing companion. But she failed to inspire enthusiasm for study or effort.

How had Manon failed in her duty? Was she to blame for Eudora's insensibility to the fine things of

life? How could her interest in them be awakened? Manon asked herself and others. Her frankness in regard to her disappointment seems like insensibility; it is in reality an anxious seeking for an open sesame to a torpid mind and an *insouciant* disposition. She sought advice from Lavater (July 7, 1788) and other *savants*, and experimented with different systems and environments. But Eudora remained obdurate. The mild discipline of the convent of the Visitation, the gentle influence of Pastor Frossard's cultivated household, left her unchanged. She continued to resist instruction.

"We must not deceive ourselves; your daughter is affectionate. She loves me, she will be gentle; but she has not an idea, no grain of memory. She looks as though she had just left her nurse, and gives no promise of intellect. She has embroidered a work-bag for me prettily and does a little needlework; otherwise she has developed no tastes, and I begin to believe we must not persist in expecting much, still less in exacting it," Manon wrote Roland in 1791. She was bitterly disappointed. She had looked forward so eagerly to teaching her child, to studying with her, to reviving her old accomplishments for Eudora. Manon's pride suffered as well as her affection. But, though clear-sighted, she was never lacking in tenderness. Eudora's cough "rends" her heart. She "hates" Le Clos after a viper has been discovered in the garden, because Eudora *might* have been bitten. Daily bulletins of the child's health were sent to Roland and to Bosc. Manon wished that the latter might have a Eudora of his own, and if only a man like him in eighteen years

from then could think so too—she might sing her Nunc Dimittis.

Match-making already! Manon was true to the traditions of her people. She had already tried her hand at the business, and had persuaded the tepid Sophie to accept the withered hand of an aged captain of grenadiers, the Chevalier Pierre Dragon de Gomiecourt, in 1782. Two years afterwards Manon advocated the marriage of the brilliant Henriette to a widower of seventy-seven years, the bigoted, haughty Seigneur de Vouglans, who had written a bloodthirsty refutation of Beccaria! Mademoiselle Phlipon had detested this upholder of ancient abuses, and expressed her feelings freely in her letters to Henriette. Great must have been the reverence of Madame Roland for the holy estate, for M. de Vouglans in becoming a *parti* for her friend lost all his terrors. Was the girl's standard so much higher than the matron's because experience had hardened and blunted her? Was the idealist growing sensible? Or did she feel that the freedom and dignity conferred by marriage were worth many sacrifices? French society had no place for the old maid, and January often wed with May.

There had been in those first autumn days at Le Clos a fly in Manon's box of balm, a misunderstanding with Bosc that dragged along for half a year. Bosc's father had treated Roland by letter; after the physician's death (April 4, 1784) Madame Roland, as her husband's health had not improved, consulted another doctor. Bosc took this fancied slight to his father's science deeply to heart. He left his friends suddenly and coldly (September 23, 1784), and for many months

answered Manon's propitiatory letters, even Roland's affectionate pleading, briefly and dryly. Naturally extremely sensitive and rather exacting, Bosc was at the time of the quarrel in an unwonted state of nervous excitability.

There is no doubt that during Manon's stay in Paris Bosc's friendship and admiration for her had quickened into another feeling. His father's death and the new responsibilities it laid on his young shoulders, his respect for Manon, his affection for Roland, his family traditions of honor, and his own fine ideals, while they welded his nascent passion into a noble form, were potent for unhappiness. The poor boy, for he was one in years though already a savant, loved Manon. The deep melancholy that she ascribed solely to his bereavement had a double cause. Roland, whose manners with younger men were singularly engaging, divined something of Bosc's complex emotion, and wrote him kindly, tactful messages. Bosc's misery found expression in a letter to Manon just after she left Paris for Amiens.

"Everything agitates and disquiets me. Would you believe that having noticed that the word *friend* was repeated more often than formerly in your letters, my piece of mind was troubled? Good-by. Be happy always. Perhaps I shall not reach that degree of corruption wherein others' happiness is a torture for us, but I believe I am on the way to it; I need some force to turn me back from it." (June 1, 1784.)

While in this condition of emotional excitement, it was only natural that Bosc should have been easily wounded. Something of Manon's personal attraction

L. A. C. BOSC

L'original en portrait appartient au Muséum
par M^me^ Belgique née Bosc.

Taken from the volume *Le Naturaliste Bosc*, by Auguste Rey, published at Versailles, 1901, by Librairie Léon Besnard; at Paris, 1901, by Librairie Alphonse Picard

informs her letters to him during the period of his estrangement. She coaxed, argued, scolded, made little Eudora, whom Bosc was very fond of, her mother's advocate, and sturdily refused to take offense, or to alter the affectionate tone of her letters. We wonder that Bosc could have resisted such gentle pleading. Never was an olive-branch more ingratiatingly proffered. When he finally accepted Manon's "hearty kiss and good box on the ear," the peace pact was signed for the rest of their lives. Madame Roland possessed the rare gift of making friends of her lovers. It is true that formerly friendship was of a warmer constitution than it is to-day, and more closely resembled its dangerous little brother. An eighteenth-century Terence might have written of it:

"In *friendship* are all these evils: wrongs,
Suspicions, enmities, reconciliations, war and peace."

Not that the course of platonic affection ran perfectly smooth after this episode, but Bosc's feeling for Manon gradually grew purely fraternal, and years afterwards he had so utterly forgotten the confusion of desires and the feverish longing which Manon herself had exorcised so sweetly, that he could sincerely write: "Many people believed, owing to my intimacy with her, that our relations were closer, but I was never in love with her."

Though the duties of Bosc's post kept him in Paris, Lanthenas had plenty of leisure and spent a large share of it at Le Clos. He passed part of the winter in Lyons with Roland. His devotion to his friends

seemed flawless, but the shock of the Revolution was to shatter it—with much else that appeared enduring.

Life in Villefranche, where part of the year was spent, was "very austere." The Rolands occupied the second floor of the big old family house, which they shared with the mother and the eldest son, Dominique Roland, a town councillor as well as a canon, an academician and director of the nuns at the hospital. A younger and gentler brother, Laurent, was an occasional visitor. In spite of the *politesse du foyer*, the *hearth-side* courtesy that sweetens domestic life in France, there were difficult moments to pass in the Roland household. The mother, "of the age of the century," "venerable through her years, terrible through her temper," was as critical as she was helpless. She was given to gormandizing, and each "little carouse" was followed by a short illness. She loved company, gave dinner invitations thoughtlessly, spent most of her time at cards, and put Manon's patience to proof, who philosophically decided that life with a husband like Roland would be *too* happy to be real without some petty annoyance; and, having satisfied herself that the mama-in-law had no heart, she ceased trying to win it, and took her scoldings and criticisms with relative serenity. Bosc as well as Roland was her confidant, and all the family jars were carried to him, which undoubtedly helped Manon to bear them.

Canon Roland, too, was difficult to live with. Though like most of the higher clergy of his century he was a man of the world, with a fondness for literature and research, he was a conservative in politics, a

dogmatist in religion, and a despot in disposition. Manon was on excellent terms with him; prejudiced and domineering as he was, he had yielded to her spell. One of her methods of conciliating him was rather questionable, or would have been in another age and environment. She wrote of it to Bosc quite unabashed: "I leave him the satisfaction of thinking that his dogmas appear as evident to me as they seem to him, and I behave in a manner suitable to a provincial mother of a family who should set a good example to all. As I was very devout in my first youth, I know the Scriptures and even the church services as well as my philosophers, and I willingly make use of my early learning, which edifies him very much." This is far from admirable; what follows is still less so: "The *sincerity* and tenderness of my heart, my facility in yielding for the good of others, when I can do so without offending *truth* and *honesty*, make me what I should be, quite naturally, and without effort. Keep this burst of confidence *in petto*."

Not content with confessing dissimulation, Manon prides herself on it as a proof of the *sincerity* of her nature! A strange contradiction in a usually honest and truthful person. It was one she shared with her contemporaries. The church was so integral a part of social and national life that to abstain from its services would have caused a public scandal. Still to conform to something that it would have been difficult and even dangerous to oppose was hardly meritorious, and assuredly offered no cause for self-gratulation. But Manon was a hardened offender. She had "edified her neighbor" by attending church in her girlhood

after she lost even the wish to believe, and she continued "to set a good example to others" not only at Amiens, Villefranche, and Lyons, but at Le Clos, where the way of the outward conformer was indeed hard, as the village church of Théizé was only reached by a long, stiff climb over the rocks.

The sleepy, commonplace town of Villefranche, though it was more picturesque then than now, with its long walls and fortress-gates, displeased the Parisienne. She never mentioned the marvellously ornate façade of Sainte Marie des Marais, which Gothic art had carved and chiselled like a reliquary, but then she had never referred to the grand old cathedral of Amiens. Perhaps she, with her contemporaries, for Gothic read barbarous. Her impressions of Villefranche were, of course, communicated to Bosc.

"Here the great luxury is that of the table. The smallest bourgeois household, a little above the common people, offers more exquisite meals than the richest families of Amiens, and a good many of those in easy circumstances in Paris. A mean dwelling, a delicate table, elegant dress, constant and heavy gaming, that is the style of this flat-roofed town, where the streets serve as drains for the sewage. On the other hand, they are not stupid here; they speak well, without accent or solecisms, the tone of society is courteous and agreeable, but they are a little—that is to say, a great deal—short of cultivation. . . . Here is the opposite of Amiens; there the women are generally better than the men; here, on the contrary, it is the women who show their provincial varnish most plainly." (April 22, 1785.)

Of her domestic life Madame Roland wrote: "You ask me what I am doing, and you do not believe that I have the same occupations as I had at Amiens. I have truly less leisure to devote myself to the latter, or to combine them with agreeable studies. I am now, above all else, a housewife, and I don't lack business of this kind. My brother wishes me to take care of the house, which his mother had not kept for years, and which he was tired of keeping or of leaving partly to the servants.

"This is the way my time is employed. After rising I busy myself with my husband and child; I have one of them read while I give them both their breakfast; then I leave them together in the study, or only the little one with her nurse, when the papa is absent, and I inspect all the business of the household, from the cellar to the attic—the fruits, wine, linen, and other details provide me with some new care every day. If there is time before dinner (and note that we dine at noon, and we must be tidy, because we are apt to have company that the mama loves to invite) I spend it in the study in the work that I have always shared with my husband. After dinner we remain together for some time, and I always stay with my mother-in-law until she has visitors; in the interval I sew.

"As soon as I am free I go up-stairs to the study, and begin or continue to write. When evening comes the good brother joins us; we read the newspapers or something better; occasionally several men come in. If it is not I who am the reader, I sew quietly while listening, and I take care that the child does not interrupt us, for she never leaves us except during some

formal meal, when as I wish that she should not annoy any one, and that no one should pay attention to her, she stays in her room, or goes out with the nurse, and does not appear until dessert is over. I make only such visits as are absolutely necessary; I go out sometimes, though rarely until now, to walk in the afternoon with my husband and Eudora.

"With some shades of difference, each day sees me go around the same circle. English, Italian, transporting music, all these are left far behind. These are tastes and acquirements that remain under the ashes, where I shall find them again to teach my Eudora as she develops."

This domesticity was not without diversions. The mama saw company daily, and occasionally there was a formal dinner, with food enough to victual a regiment. Manon passed the contribution purse at church, and sometimes even went to a dance. But she had little in common with her neighbors, and kept apart as much as she could from the "*canaille caladoise*," as she scornfully termed the best society of Villefranche.

Life in Lyons was gayer and free from petty cares. There for two months every year she enjoyed leisure, and even a little luxury. There was no carping mother-in-law to propitiate, and Manon had Roland to herself. Her position was an assured and pleasant one. She had a cosey apartment on the quai, overlooking the river, in a sunny, cheerful quarter, with a guest-room for Lanthenas when he chose to occupy it, a subscription to the theatre, and the use of a friend's carriage for visits and drives. There were dinner-parties fol-

lowed by conversation instead of cards, more time for reading than at Villefranche, and the cultivation of interesting acquaintances. A letter to one of them, a certain Varenne de Fenille, merits citation. This brief for the study of English letters was written in reply to some objections made to Roland's theory that English would one day become the universal language:

"March 21, 1789, Lyons. . . . You ask me if the English language is harmonious, and you insist very adroitly on the difficulty for foreigners of its pronunciation as a kind of proof of the negative. To answer that question I wish that you could hear an educated Englishman recite the fine verses of his great national poets; the nobility of his accents, the facility of his delivery, the justness of the cadence, or the measure of the rhythm, the full tones and sonorous terminations would persuade you in spite of yourself, and your conquered ear would convey to your mind an idea of the beauties that want of knowledge had not permitted you to seize. . . . I will add that if there remains still something to say for the intrinsic difficulty of English, difficulty that a little habit soon surmounts, and that necessity or pleasure never considers, it is made up for a hundred times by freedom in the use of elisions, very frequent in English, an amazing liberty in contracting or extending words in a way that leaves all its vivacity to the imagination, all its fire to sentiment, and all its grandeur to genius, which expresses all the accents of emotion, and opens to the poet as to the orator the most vast career.

"Our relations with the United States, the advantage of commerce with them, etc., will spread the necessity

of cultivating their language through all parts of the world. As to the pleasure of cultivating it—Ah! *Monsieur*, 'if the works of pure imagination make more proselytes than those of philosophy, of physical science, or of lofty morality,' what tongue should be cultivated as much as English, which unites them all?

"They are the people of Europe who possess the strongest and tenderest imagination, the most varied and interesting novels, and if not the most chastened perhaps the most pleasing drama.

"You have learned Italian for Ariosto, Tasso, Metastasio, Goldoni, etc. You are at the same time a man of learning and a man of taste, and you have not learned English! I do not say for Locke, Newton, and so many others, but for its Milton, sublime in his beauties, astonishing even in his digressions, fresh and touching as Homer in his details and descriptions; a true epic poet, with whom we have no one to compare; less fecund, perhaps, than the inexhaustible Ariosto, less formal than Tasso, and perhaps as great as both of them.

"You have not learned it [English] for Thompson [sic], the amiable singer of the seasons, rich and majestic as the nature that he paints like a master, worthy to sit at the foot of his creator's throne, whose divine breath seems to have inspired him. Happy husbandman! You who tread with pleasure the fields cultivated by your care; with Virgil in your hand you apply to yourself the *fortunatos nimium*, and you have never fixed wet eyes on the verses of Thompson [sic]! And Pope, so wise and so brilliant, has not brought to your spirit with the sweetness of his song that of his

philosophy, also, in those moments when the most tranquil soul sighs in secret over the trials of life. And the ingenious Dryden, the witty Congreve, the voluptuous Rochester, have they never called a smile to your lips? But how have you never sought to know Shakespeare, about whom the English are always enthusiastic, in spite of all our much-vaunted perfections? Why have you not been curious to know on what was founded the admiration, the enchantment, the transports of an enlightened nation for an author who thinks proper to neglect the three unities, to make many people die on the stage, to place side by side pictures of common life and the most lofty deeds, precisely as they are in nature, and to have had no other master, no other law, than it and his genius?

"Look, then, I beg you, in Othello for that which is lacking in Orosmane, which makes us pass with far more terror through all the stages of jealousy. Compare, if you have the courage, the shade of Ninus to that of Hamlet. Find by examining it how our Ducis has frozen Lear, by arranging it in the French fashion, and correcting it according to the rules of Aristotle, just as our grandmothers put our feet on little boards between strips of wood to make us turn them out, or made us wear iron collars to oblige us to hold ourselves erect. Consider the charming characters of women so delicately drawn by Shakespeare's brush, his tender Cordelia, the innocent Desdemona, the unfortunate Ophelia. Conceive, if you can, how the same man could unite so much grace to so much strength; how he has made us pale with fright, or thrill in response to the sweetest emotions, carry ten-

derness and terror to their height, and follow or precede them with philosophy or gayety. Call his writings monstrous if you will, but you will read them over twenty times, and far from imputing the enjoyment of his works as a crime to a whole nation, you will share it in spite of all that our Le Bossus can say. . . .

"But let us leave the follies of the stage, and commune with ourselves in novels, sweet fictions that feed tender hearts: world of illusions, into which when unhappy they throw themselves to find other noble hearts to cherish and to pity. O! for this, Monsieur, you will have to leave Italy, for I do not imagine that the insipid Chiari, with his silly adventures and still sillier characters, will keep you there two minutes. Well, then, where will you go? Seek for adventures with our knights, or sail the *Tendre* river with our Céladons, for I can't fancy that the metaphysics of our modern novelists will please you any better than the bad company that some of them give us. You will name Julie to me, and I reply that I read it every year, but I dare to say, in spite of all my respect and love for that writer of ours to whom I give the preference, it is not as a *novel* that his Julie is admirable. This delightful work becomes so by beauties foreign, so to say, to its nature, and only their intrinsic excellence prevents them from being found out of place. Rousseau, himself, was the first to confess that Richardson was his master.

"No people can offer a novel capable of sustaining a comparison with Clarissa; it is the masterpiece of its kind, the model and the despair of all imitators. Our pygmies with their compasses will discuss its pro-

portions and blame its length, but they themselves fall on their knees and confess that they know of nothing as fine. Meantime the mass of our novels is infinitely more inferior to English fiction of the second order than Julie differs in perfection from Clarissa. If the English were not also brave, wise, and good politicians and profound philosophers, I would say that they are the novelists of Europe. There are many of them, and their romances bear the impress of an exquisite sensibility, of great knowledge of the human heart, and of a touching melancholy. Fieldings [sic] and several others, even women, have entered this career with honor and success. However, do not imagine that a tinge of consumption makes me lean toward the English, whom our gay folks reproach for their sombre colors; if I am deliciously touched, I am also heartily amused, and whoever has been a witness of the frank merriment, the loud laughs, and the kind of delirium to which the English abandon themselves in their theatres, will admit that the same amount of feeling renders us equally susceptible to the deepest passions and the gentlest affections, the most spirited pictures and the most amiable fancies.

"Nevertheless, I can only guess at the beauties of the English tongue, and if I had not been helped by translations I could not speak of many of the authors who have used it. I learned English without a master; I heard it spoken in London only a month. I read English prose, now I must study its poetry. In spite of my taste for languages, my passion for literature, I love my husband better than all of them, and as he is busy with [Industrial] Arts before everything,

it is now several years since I have known or seen or understood anything but [Industrial] Arts. It is only for a holiday, and always together, that we make little excursions into the noble domain of literature, to which, forgetting all the Arts in the world, I hope to return some day. . . ."

The centres of intellectual life in magnificent Lyons, as in dull Villefranche, were their academies. Roland was a member of them both, as well as of a dozen others. These provincial academies were seed-plots of culture in eighteenth-century France; they had little in common with the puerile literary *accademie* of decadent Italy, but were associations for the study of sciences, letters, and the industrial arts. They offered prizes for the best essays on philosophy and morals, on economics, agriculture, and applied science; they instituted courses of lectures, and in many instances opened schools of superior and technical studies to supplement the deficiencies of the obsolete universities. The members wrote papers, gave public lectures, and receptions to any wandering lights of learning that passed through the town. Roland was a member of fifteen academies, as such membership was a dignified and practical method of extending his relations with scientific men. The academic archives of Villefranche and Lyons bear witness to his activity. He wrote on many subjects, ranging from a Discours sur les femmes, and Abridged Reflections on Chemical Affinities and on Fermentation, to Causes of the Decadence of Commerce, and of the Population of Lyons, besides papers on the subjects he had already treated in his Dictionnaire—oils, soaps, dyeing, leathers, and

JEAN MARIE ROLAND DE LA PLATIÈRE, MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

From a portrait drawn and engraved by Nicolas Colbert

skins. As Roland was an enthusiastic and industrious member of both the academies, Manon's sphere of activities was enlarged, and his papers were remodelled, polished, and copied by her. Until differences of political opinion relaxed or broke old bonds, these reunions were a source of genuine pleasure to both husband and wife. When Roland became minister of the interior in 1792, his letter to the Academy of Lyons proves that in despite of many political feuds between them, his relations with the majority of the members were cordial and friendly.

CHAPTER XIII

RUMBLINGS BEFORE THE STORM

THUS five years passed in a quiet round of humble duties and sober pleasures. There were some vexations; free-trading Roland naturally sided with the manufacturer against the merchant, with the people of Lyons against the King's officials and their exactions. There was no title and no retiring pension, though Manon did not despair of winning them some day, and tried to keep her name green in the "Bear's" memory (September 18, 1787).

The household was somewhat cramped for money; Manon would have enjoyed passing more than two months a year in expensive Lyons, and a comparatively small outlay would have made Le Clos the "bijou" of her ambitions, but no woman was ever more indifferent to externals, no one ever practised riches of spirit (as Manon's dear Saint François de Sales called it) more unconsciously; the opulence of her inner life overflowed her environment. Her illusions and enthusiasms still remained with her. Rousseau was her mentor always, the enchanter "who made her forget everything, who could always awaken in her feelings that rendered her happy in spite of fate"; with him she sought sanctuary against discouragement and doubt. And Roland was still paramount in her heart. The little worries of her complicated house-

hold and her disappointment in Eudora were mere cloudlets on the azure of her happiness. Her letters were those of a lover, with a lover's anxieties and impatience in the absence of the beloved, and though more tranquil are as affectionate as those of Mademoiselle Phlipon. During this stage of her life the inspector was often absent on his official duties, and her imagination had full play. She idealized him, as she had Sophie, as she had La Blancherie, as she did the household tasks of Villefranche and the drudgery on the Dictionnaire. In the summer of 1789 Roland had a long and dangerous illness, and his wife's devotion not only saved his life, which was despaired of, but so sustained her that though she passed twelve days and nights in great suspense, without undressing and almost without sleep, and then spent six months in following the anxieties and alarms of a tedious convalescence, her health was unbroken and her strength was doubled. Her care of her husband and his increasing dependence on her strengthened the bond between them.

A short trip to Switzerland varied the gentle monotony of the Rolands' lives; they left home on June 17, 1787, accompanied by Eudora and the curé of Longpont, to visit Geneva, Berne, Lucerne, Zurich, Schaffhausen, Bâle, Strasburg, and Mulhouse, returning to Lyons by Besançon and Châlons in July. In the course of their rapid journey they met Lavater, Albert Gosse, Gessner, Hofer, and other Swiss notabilities. Madame Roland wrote an account of her travels and a portion of her Voyage en Suisse was published anonymously in a Lyons magazine, Le Conservateur

(vol. II, 1788). Later Champagneux included the Voyage in his edition of Madame Roland's works (1800, vol. III). Manon found in the intellectual cultivation and simple habits of the Swiss her republican ideal, and saw on every hand the happy influences of a popular government. She made many friends, and a souvenir of her Swiss tour still remains at La Rosière: Lavatér's silhouettes of the Rolands.

During her life in the south Manon's interest in politics was almost null. She yawned over the newspapers (February 10, 1787) and was interested in changes in the administration only so far as they affected her husband's situation. With a fair knowledge of the abuses and wrongs of the government, she contented herself with pitying its victims, notably the peasants, and abstained from useless criticisms. She accepted the *status quo* with more resignation than did Roland, and sagely strove to accommodate herself to it. No one had a keener sense of the essential injustice of the old régime. Few women knew more of the practical side of politics, of their influence on national prosperity. Her work on the Dictionnaire, her close companionship with Roland, had familiarized her to an unusual degree with industrial and economic questions. Her experience in place-seeking had brought her close to the machinery of government. She had no illusions and apparently little hope. She felt the unrest and discontent that were in the air, but saw no remedy for existing ills, and doubtless decided that it was easier to bear them quietly than to protest uselessly. Her own part in her country was so infinitesimal that

MADAME ROLAND

From a drawing by Danloux in the National Library of Paris (Faugère Legacy)

her patriotism was latent, unsuspected by herself. Her experience had not been one to cherish enthusiasm; government by grace was grim of aspect seen from below the terraces of Versailles, where the arm of the law was extended to punish far more often than to protect.

As a child Manon had lived in dread proximity to the place of execution, the Grève. Echoes from it reached her in her little cabinet among her books, and were prolonged in her letters to Sophie. It is curious to note these heralds of the great changes in the girls' correspondence; Manon's letters were generally introspective, and there is generally little space in them devoted to public events. She was too busy forging a working philosophy of life, analyzing her own thoughts and sentiments, and exploring new continents of knowledge to give more than a few lines to the news of the day. The first national event that Manon mentioned in her letters was the illness of the King. It would seem difficult for a girl of high ideals, growing up under the evil rule of Louis XV, to look upon his demise as anything but a blessing to his people, yet Manon wrote:

"The King received the sacrament on Saturday morning; to-day's bulletin gives sad thoughts. The news of his malady has affected me. . . . Though the obscurity of my birth, of my name, and my position seems to absolve me from interest in the government, I feel in spite of all that the general good concerns me. My country is something to me, my attachment to it forms a sensitive chord in my heart."

There is no further mention of the final stage of the

long dissolution of Louis XV, except a reference to the inoculation of the princes. A few months later Manon visited Versailles, where the spectacle of court life confirmed her republican opinions. But she soon abandoned her detached and critical attitude and responded to the enthusiasm all about her. She shared in the joy of the people at the return of the Parlement, yet she was judicious enough to realize that it was no barrier against the royal will, "and resembled old ruins that are reverenced for what they have been, though it is, of course, well to show respect for the laws and those who administer them." Manon ended a description of the fireworks and rejoicings in her quarter of Paris (from which the clergy ostentatiously abstained) by a eulogy of the new reign. She evidently shared the cheerful anticipations of the nation, its belief in the good-will and integrity of the young King, in his desire to right the misdeeds of his predecessor. His projected economies, suppressions of sinecures, and reforms in the administration were recognized with a full measure of gratitude.

"Here we have enlightened and well-meaning ministers [Turgot, Miromesnil, Maurepas], a young prince who is docile to their advice, and who is full of good intentions, an amiable and beneficent Queen, a polite, agreeable, and decent court, an honored legislative body, a charming people which only desires to be able to love its master, and a kingdom full of resources! Ah, how happy we are going to be!" (November 16, 1774.)

"A charming people!" wrote Manon in a warm outburst of feeling. Her next letter but one presents a

very different picture of this same people. Two criminals had been condemned, one to be burned, the other to be broken on the wheel, and the sentence was executed, as usual, on the Place de Grève. As usual, also, all Paris took a holiday and flocked to the spectacle as to an illumination or a theatre. From her windows on the Quai de l'Horloge Manon saw with horror the dense mass of people blocking the streets on their way to the Grève, crowding casements and balconies, and even swarming on the roofs to catch a glimpse of the execution. For twelve hours one wretched creature shrieked and writhed on the wheel; the unwearied spectators clapping their hands and shouting with joy. It was the first time that Manon had been brought face to face with the savage in man. This revelation of popular barbarity affected her deeply. She strove to find reasons for it, to reconcile it with her philosophical speculations on the perfectibility of human nature. With the taint of the smoke in the air and the screams of the broken wretch (which were "heard even from mama's bed," where Manon had taken refuge from them and her own horrified thoughts) ringing in her ears, she tried to reconcile this ferocity with the theory of the non-existence of evil. "Are there then atrocious beings whose existence we do not suspect?" (The Terror answered Manon's question years too late.) "No, I cannot believe that man is born so wicked; it is his passions, either uncontrolled or badly directed, that produce these effects. . . . Is there a certain ferocity, a real taste for blood, in the human heart? But no, I cannot believe it; I think that we all love strong impressions, because they give us lively feelings;

it is the same propensity that sends people of delicate taste to the theatre and the populace to the Grève."

"Truly, human nature is not worthy of respect when one considers it in the mass," wrote Manon, looking down on this teeming human ant-hill. Strangely enough, Louis Blanc quotes this remark to prove Madame Roland's lack of love for the people! He should have continued to quote, and added the sentence she wrote next day, after a night made hideous by the sound of agonizing cries and no less horrible applause. "I confess that I have at the same time great contempt and great love for men; they are so wicked and so mad that it is impossible not to despise them; on the other hand, they are so unhappy that one cannot help pitying and loving them" (December 14, 1774).

This revelation of the wild beast in humanity probably prepared Manon for the outbreaks of violence that followed the failure of hope in famishing breasts, as she wrote calmly of the bread riots of May, 1775, that followed the joyous anticipations of the new reign. For, in spite of a well-meaning king and an upright and resourceful comptroller-general, no miracles were forthcoming; loaves were not multiplied nor cruses filled, neither peace nor plenty had come to a starving France. One lean year only had passed since Louis XVI's accession, when a hungry mob filled the great court at Versailles and clamored for bread. A grim reply answered its petition of grievances: a gallows forty feet high for the two leaders.

Next day the disorder reached Paris; Manon wrote of what she saw of it at the end of a letter devoted to a discussion of the philosophical speculations of Leib-

nitz and Helvétius. She described the pillage of the markets, the merely formal resistance of the soldiers, the bakers closing the shutters of their shops and throwing the loaves from the windows, the grenadiers protecting the ovens from the impatient crowd waiting to carry off the fresh bread, finally the establishment of a maximum price, and the queues of people who stood patiently in line for hours, each one with his eight *sols* in his hand. The prudent Parisian shopkeepers fastened their shutters and barred their doors. Nerves were at such stretch that while Manon was at mass some children, frightened at the pillage of a baker's shop, ran into the church and almost caused a panic.

These sights "awoke new feelings and gave rise to a thousand reflections" in Manon; she remembered that Sully had said that even with intelligence and good-will it is yet very difficult to do good. "I believe it, I excuse, and I pity," she added. In her next letter she returned to the subject; she has only praise for the young King, and surprise that the people should revolt against the dearth that was borne so quietly under his predecessor. (Many surprises of this kind awaited Manon.) She added some reflections that Madame Roland might have remembered later with profit: "Everything is interdependent in a political system. Much reflection, knowledge, and experiment are necessary to change a single wheel the movement of which may affect the whole machine, and either preserve or destroy it. . . . But the people do not understand that; they do not see that the sovereign obliged to respect property has many precautions to

take in all that concerns it even indirectly. The people feels that it is hungry, and knows that it has not the money to satisfy its hunger. It speaks only of bread; it was the only thing that interested it; it was always thus in all times and all places. The Jews wished to make Jesus Christ their king only after he had fed them miraculously." As for the disturbances in the provinces, they had been grossly exaggerated, and were due, every one said, to agitation rather than actual scarcity. Here Manon passed into a description of the pretty custom of crowning a rosière at Salencey, and dropped into poetry to console Sophie for her spoiled garden, ravaged by a hail-storm.

The same cool reasonableness characterized her views of the American war. Her republican sympathies were, of course, with the insurgents, but they were expressed moderately, and without the warmth which she showed often in the discussion of abstract questions. To Voltaire's triumph in Paris she gave a few rather depreciatory lines in her letters; evidently he stood for little to the devotee of Rousseau. She admired Voltaire's poetry, his wit, and his taste, but she had a small opinion of his political views and his philosophy. She thought "he would have done better peacefully to enjoy his renown in his château of Ferney, surrounded by his adoring subjects, than to come to Paris to exhibit the absurdities of an old man greedy for incense." This is all that our young philosopher had to say of the sage "who had broken the fetters of reason and avenged the cause of humanity" (Condorcet), or of the honors that a grateful country laid at his feet, such honors as never before had poet

received, even when Petrarch was crowned at the Capitol.

The admiration that Manon could not feel for Voltaire she bestowed freely on the somewhat theatrical simplicity of Joseph II, who visited Paris incognito as the Count of Falkenstein. Her sketch of him, blond, handsome, "very like the Queen," in his round wig and puce-colored coat, with austere steel buttons, running about Paris alone, on foot or in a hackney-coach, visiting the sights like any traveller, is very engaging.

Turgot's dismissal and the royal abandonment of reforms and economies that it implied stunned her, as it did thinking France (May 12, 1776). "This Sunday is a day of revolution," the girl wrote Sophie, not knowing how truly, for with the fall of Turgot perished the hope of a peaceful and equable adjustment of the burdens of the people. On the whole, Manon's interest in national affairs was feeble compared to her ardor for study and acquisition. Her self-absorption accounted for something of this indifference and the narrow interests of her relations for more. Her cultivated friends were conservative and disillusioned men of the world, with small faith in utopias. The girl probably considered that she possessed no store of data from which to form sound political opinions, hence suspension of judgment became an intellectual duty.

Later collaboration with Roland, by acquainting her with the economic situation of France, aroused Manon's interest in politics. If she loyally adopted her husband's point of view, it was because its sound-

ness appealed to her reason, and she tried to hold the balance in which opinions are weighed with a steady hand. Her experience in place-seeking left her with little faith in any real amelioration under existing conditions, and a disbelief in, even a fear of, sudden changes, lest they lead to new and worse abuses. She was uninterested in what she rather contemptuously termed "*la politique gazettière.*" She had seen the failure of so many hopes, the breaking of so many promises. What did it matter *à quelle sauce on serait mangé*, since the people were always devoured? Ministers changed, but taxes and imposts, *gabelle*, *corvée*, and *dixième* changed not.

The evils of the administration were sadly familiar to the inspector and his coworker, who (to mention one of many instances) drew up the report on the ruin of Lyons in 1791, tracing the decay of her former prosperity to the crushing exactions and forced loans that had filled her once busy streets with beggared operatives, and practically reduced this formerly flourishing town to bankruptcy. Small wonder that, with such examples before her, Manon was sceptical of "the good that is always *going* to be done."

Daily contact with the peasants of the Lyonnais added to Manon's knowledge of, and dissatisfaction with, the government. She pitied, she could not hope. She had sighed over the wretchedness of the artisans, she wept over the misery of the country folk. She did what she could to alleviate them, and then tried to banish from her mind the woes she could not relieve. Are we not even now turning away our eyes and thoughts from wrongs that we are impotent to

J.M ROLAND DE LA PLATIERE
MINISTRE DE L'INTERIEUR EN 1792
DEPUTÉ DE LA SOMME A LA CONVENTION
DE A VILLE FRANCHE (RHÔNE) EN 1734

PORTRAIT OF ROLAND
Drawn by Gabriel in 1792

redress, helplessly stopping our ears against the plaint of obscure sufferers?

That the failure of her own efforts to obtain adequate reward and recognition of Roland's services counted for something in her indifference and hopelessness is indubitable; that it counted for much no one who is familiar with Manon's correspondence can believe. Her own grievance was so insignificant that it was forgotten in her complaints of the cruelties and blunders of the industrial régime and the barbarities of the feudal system. The Rolands' exasperation was too justly founded on a basis of wide knowledge to be ascribed to mere personal dissatisfaction. The individual injustice was minimized by acquaintance with the larger wrong. From this state of half-bitter, half-sorrowful resignation she was suddenly aroused. She herself told of her awakening in one forceful line: "*La Révolution vint et nous enflamma.*"

During the peaceful years that Manon had been gathering the fruits of her little farm Calonne had brought France to the verge of bankruptcy. His original method of dealing with his own financial difficulties—"To be or to become rich, it is only necessary to appear so"—he had applied to those of the state, with the result that in 1787 the deficit had grown to a hundred and forty millions of livres. No longer able to hide the emptiness of the Treasury, or to impose more forced loans on a sceptical public, he audaciously advocated the measure that had caused the dismissal of his predecessors. This was a *subvention territoriale*, which placed all the property in France on equal terms under the tax-gatherer.

Beaumarchais had called Calonne a dancer. He had, indeed, danced lightly to the verge of disaster, and on the brink had saved himself by an astounding pirouette. It was the monarchy only that went down into the gulf.

"But what you are giving me is Necker's; this is pure Neckerism," protested Louis XVI, when Calonne submitted his plans for taxation. "Sire," returned the nimble minister, "in the present condition of things we can offer you nothing better." Calonne, not satisfied with appropriating Necker's policy, dared to ascribe to him the deficit caused by his own extravagance. Fearing that the Parlement would oppose not only the new land-tax but the other innovations in the Necker-Calonne programme, the comptroller proposed to the King that an assembly of Notables should be convoked. An assembly of Notables! The novelty, like most novelties, was an antiquity revived; it had been a hundred and seventy-five years since the last one had met (1614), and the renewal of an old institution lent an air of authority to the new measure. To this assembly the King himself would communicate his plan "for the relief of his people, the settlement of the finances, and the reformation of several abuses."

The court of Versailles, and especially the Queen's court of Trianon, received this news with unconcealed alarm. Since the last forced loan the former profuse golden shower had become a mere dribble, and the favorites were languishing. Dire rumors of pensions reduced and projected economies were then only the forerunners of the real calamity, a universal land-tax. Even the fact that the Notables would all be nobles,

presided over by princes of the blood, was not wholly reassuring. To the older and wiser courtiers this institution of a new assembly was clear proof of the decline of the royal authority. "The King has just sent in his resignation," said the Vicomte de Ségur when the news reached him. But the Paris wits who had little faith in the reform of abuses conducted by those who lived by them, expressed their scepticism in the following announcement: "Notice is hereby given that the Comptroller-General has formed a new Company of Actors, whose first performance will take place before the court on Monday, the 29th inst [of January]. The principal piece will be Les Fausses Confidences; to be followed by Le Consentiment Forcé; after which an allegorical ballet-pantomime, composed by M. de Calonne, entitled Le Tonneau des Danaïdes, will be given."

The well-named Comédie des Notables ended (May 25, 1787) with a refusal to pass the territorial subsidy, the nobles very naturally declining to abandon not only their right to be exempted from taxation but their right to tax others. The comedy proved a tragedy for Calonne, who was obliged to confess to the annual revenue deficit of one hundred and forty millions. He had accused Necker of cooking accounts in his report and of leaving the Treasury empty. Necker was justified, Calonne harshly dismissed, and exiled to Lorraine.

Calonne's successor (May 1, 1787), Loménie de Brienne, the Queen's man, was forced by the increasing deficit to propose not only a land-tax but a stamp-tax as well, to be levied from all classes. But this measure

could not be passed without the sanction of the Parlement of Paris, which refused to register the edicts, and continued to refuse in face of the King's displeasure. It remained contumacious in spite of royal commands (August 6, 1787), of exile from Paris to Troyes, and the arrest and imprisonment of its leaders (May 6, 1788), earning great popularity as defender of the people's rights. The Parlement of Paris was backed by the magistracy of France, "become liberal from interest and rendered generous by oppression" (Mignet).

Meanwhile, what was to be done to fill the royal coffers? Thrifty Loménie, hard pushed, had proposed economies, especially in the Queen's household, far more costly than that of the King. Amid angry squawks and plaintive bleatings the expenses of the court of Trianon were slightly reduced, with the result of turning the Queen's spoiled pets into a snarling pack of enemies. The gulf of deficit still yawned and current expenses had to be met. To fill his empty treasury Archbishop Loménie, after a vain appeal to the clergy to remit its privilege, robbed the tills of the hospitals, and laid violent hands on the fund for the starving peasants. The chasm still gaped, and Loménie was no Curtius Necker to close it by casting in himself and his millions. Money *must* be raised, but how? Only the States-General, an assembly representing the whole nation, could legally pass fiscal edicts, the Parlement of Paris affirmed, and the provincial parlements confirmed its decision. The issue soon became national.

The Queen, snubbed and scolded by her Polignacs

and Besenvals, turned to her sporting brother-in-law Artois and his reckless military coterie. In Marie Antoinette and the prince Loménie found two sympathetic collaborators in his scheme for at once starving out the recalcitrant Parlement and annulling its authority. The establishment of minor law-courts (*bailliages*) to try the less important cases at smaller cost would reduce the revenues of the Parlement, and the formation of a Plenary Court, composed of twenty-one nobles to register Loménie's decrees, would abrogate its authority. This Cour Plénière was admirably calculated to destroy what remained of the prestige of the monarchy. Chosen largely from the valetry of Versailles, who were all to be appointed for life, it was uniquely designed as a tool, one might say a burglar's tool, for forcing the strong boxes of the King's subjects. This purpose was expressed in a proclamation worthy of its sagacious authors ("*le conseil des fous*," as Michelet called them). Nothing affords plainer proof of the gulf between enlightened France and benighted Versailles than this mare's nest of a scheme worthy of a decadent Byzantine court. The details of this childish plan for raising money and at the same time staving off the redoubtable States General were to be arranged in secret, so that the illegal fiscal edicts might be passed instantly by a *coup de main*, taking the hostile public and the rebellious Parlement by surprise.

But, as usual, domestic treason quashed the palace plot. From a window in the attics of Versailles, where the printers, closely watched, were setting up the summons to the Cour Plénière, a clay ball was tossed

containing a printed proof. No bursting shell was ever so far-reaching in its fatal effect as the breaking of this missile. The news of the conspiracy spread from an outraged capital to an indignant country. Not an edict could be registered. The Grands Bailliages sat at receipt of custom in empty court-rooms. Local riots and the organized opposition of Dauphiné and Brittany warned the King that the rusty thunderbolt of Louis XIV was dangerous only to the hand that launched it.

The Cour Plénière met once only under protest and then dissolved, a pitiful "*héroi-tragi-comédie, jouée le* 14 *Juillet* 1788 *par une société d'amateurs dans un Château aux environs de Versailles.*"

Naturally, after this flat failure Loménie's succeeding loan remained unfilled, and the tax of the second twentieth which Parlement had registered unlevied. "Lenders are afraid of ruin, tax-gatherers of hanging," wailed Weber. What resource remained for poverty-stricken royalty? States General only, Loménie assured the King, and finally, on August 8, 1788, the National States General were formally summoned for the following May, 1789, and "thinkers" were invited to propose a plan of procedure for their deliberations. Absolutism had lost its first battle. Even the Queen, prejudiced and limited as she was, still confused with the failure of her little harem plot, felt defeat in the air. Instinct warned this daughter of emperors that absolute monarchy was becoming constitutional monarchy. "The King grants States General. It is the first drum-beat of ill omen for France," she murmured to Madame Campan, growing prophetic over her coffee.

"Thinkers" having failed to provide a satisfactory order of proceedings, a second Assembly of Notables was convened (November 6, 1788) to settle two momentous questions: Shall the Third Estate have a double representation in the States General, six hundred representatives, as many as the nobility and clergy united? Shall the members of the States General vote individually or by class? Together or separately? The Notables (they were Calonne's original Notables, and all belonged to the privileged orders) opposed the double representation, and dodged the issue by count of heads.

After a month of backing and filling, nothing had been decided. Public indignation finding voice in pamphlets and caricatures, addresses and ballads, finally reached the King's ears, drowning the hammering and pounding in his forge, and Louis XVI advocated the double representation by the advice of Necker, who had been recalled in August after the fall of Loménie. Two grim advocates, hunger and death, pleaded more insistently for the people. To those who living on boiled grass and roots "asked for bread, Louis gave the Double Representation" (Michelet). Voting by head or class, and all minor matters remained undecided—not for lack of discussion, however. "All men's minds are in a ferment. Nothing is talked of but a constitution; the women especially are joining in the hubbub, and you know, as well as I, what influence they have in this country. It is a mania; everybody is an administrator, and can talk only of progress. The lackeys in the anterooms are busy reading the pamphlets that come out ten or

twelve a day, and I don't know how the printing-presses can do the work," wrote Count Fersen, the Queen's knight.

Finally, by royal edict, on January 24, 1789, the States General became an assured fact; the election of the national representatives and the preparation of the famous *cahiers* began. The *cahiers de plaintes et doléances* were memorials of complaints and grievances in which the whole people of France stated their wrongs, their sufferings, and their wishes, the reforms they desired and the compromises they were willing to accept. These documents have been made the subject of recent and exhaustive investigation, and their value to the historian of economics can hardly be overestimated. De Tocqueville called them the last will and testament of the old régime. They are certainly its foremost accuser. Is their stern arraignment just? Are they really the work of the people, or of politicians interested in exaggerating abuses and in presenting a strong case against the government? The vexed question of their authorship may now be considered definitely settled, and there is no doubt that most of the rural parish cahiers were written by the peasants themselves. "At the sight of their naïve inaccuracies, their clumsiness, and their picturesque spelling, it is hardly possible to believe that they are not, for the most part, the real work of popular assemblies," says M. Boissonade, one of the editors of the *cahiers*, and two other authorities, Messieurs Bridrey and Porée, share his conviction. The *cahiers* certainly are much alike, but they express the desires of the people, and "the same abuses, the same evils, necessarily provoked

the same complaints." The magistrates, parish priests, and lawyers, who were sometimes the secretaries and amanuenses of unlettered folk, did little but "transcribe with more or less elegance, but certainly always with fidelity, the feelings and the wishes of the people." In these memorials the voice of the peasant, mute through so many centuries of wrong, was heard at last. What Roland was to do later in person for Lyons, *curés*, local lawyers, and the "intellectuals," as M. Onou calls them, were doing for laborers and rustics. So much for the authorship of the *cahiers*.

How reliable are they in matters of fact? The prevailing opinion in France to-day is that of the editors of the *cahiers* (who naturally are more familiar with the text than any of those who have previously written on the subject), viz.: that the parish *cahiers* are generally trustworthy. Their veracity is tested by comparison with statements drawn from the municipal registers and data from other uncontested sources. Their titles to authenticity and veracity justified by investigation and comparison with contemporary documents, they furnish the substance for a new view of history, a new knowledge of the common people, and a new instrument for calculating the effect of economic conditions on the thoughts and acts of men.

Dull rumblings and slight shocks from this upheaval had, of course, reached the Rolands. They had personal, direct news, also, for Bosc and Lanthenas were ardent supporters of the projected reforms, and the Rolands' Protestant friends were won at once. No one had better cause to dislike and distrust the old régime than Roland and his wife, but for some time

Manon remained strangely lukewarm. M. Perroud believes that she was convinced that the old order would endure in spite of the revolt against it, and strove to accommodate herself to it. Roland, though at times he hoped for some return to the policy of Turgot and Trudaine, believed that officials, not methods, would be changed. For a short time Madame Roland felt something of her old enthusiasm for the Parlement during its resistance to the King and its demand for the States General. (Letters of May 19 and 22, 1788.) In June she wrote Bosc: "They say that the answer of Necker [to Calonne] is all ready, but to publish it he must leave the kingdom. What do your friends say of him? . . . All the little courts [the bailiwicks instituted by Brienne] are satisfied with the revolution. It is only we plebeians who find their hands in our pockets before any one can say 'Beware!' who are not pleased with the news of the registration [of Loménie's edicts], and of a Plenary Court sold to the King. Then the authority of the lesser courts seems to us too great. In little places where gossip and personal feeling have so much influence the fortune of private individuals is placed at the discretion of judges who are easily deceived. Let us wait and see, let us bless America, and weep on the banks of the rivers of Babylon."

Necker's return to power (August 25, 1788) gave Madame Roland some anxiety. She had always distrusted him, and feared his ill will for Roland if the latter's fearless "Notes" should come to Necker's knowledge.

Her belief, like that of the general public, in the liberalism of the Parlement was shaken by its demand

that the Orders in the States General should vote separately. She wrote Bosc on October 8 from the Clos: "You tell us nothing more, my dear, and yet the Parlement is re-established, and is acting in a surprising manner. Must the friends of order and liberty who desired its re-establishment be obliged to regret it? What has been the effect of its opinion at the capital? We are, then, only to know whether we shall vegetate sadly under the rod of a single despot, or groan under the iron yoke of several tyrants. The alternative is terrible, and leaves us no choice; it is impossible to make one between two evils. If the degradation of the nation is less universal under an aristocracy than under the despotism of an absolute monarch, the condition of the people is sometimes more wretched, and it would be with us, where the privileged classes are everything, and the largest class is almost a zero."

In the midst of rather melancholy references to her own country Madame Roland's fancy again and again gladly turned to America, the asylum of liberty, the incontrovertible proof of the practical beneficence of republican institutions. The Arcadian life of the farmers of Rhode Island and the settlers of Pennsylvania had been winningly pictured by the Frenchmen who had tasted its noble hospitality. Courtiers, soldiers, writers, farmers, philosophers, theorists, every manner of man from Lauzun to Brissot, joined in a hymn of praise to America, to its bounteous soil, its large opportunity, its free natural life, as unfettered by petty social restrictions as by caste prejudices or crippling laws.

Saint John de Crèvecœur, whose Lettres d'un cultivateur américain appealed poignantly to the harassed French landowner, had found an unspoiled Eden in the forests and fields of these new Hesperides. To the French idealists there was but one shadow, slavery, across this sunny paradise, and a Society for the Enfranchisement of the Negroes was promptly founded by Brissot, the future Girondin, on his return to France.

Lanthenas, the man of many projects, was urging his friends to realize their dream of liberty in America with him, in those agitated months that preceded the meeting of the States General. Madame Roland's references to the Promised Land glide in between her requests for political news and for technical advice about her cabbages and turnips and their insect enemies. And the genial plenty of America seemed doubly alluring by contrast with the dearth of the lean year 1788, when long drought and devastating hailstones had blighted the harvests. Discontent was exacerbated by the scarcity of food. In the provinces nobles and plebeians were discussing the double representation at the sword's point. There was civil war in the north, revolt in the south. While the enlightened portion of the Third Estate showed moderation as well as tenacity in defense of its promised rights, the mass of the people whose ignorance separated it from the middle class already had begun to express its beliefs in acts of violence. In Paris, only a few days before the opening of the States General (April, 1789), Sieur Réveillon's paper factory was sacked and burned by rioters. The sieur was accused of "aristocracy," and of having said that a workman could live on fifteen

sous a day. The Gardes Françaises and the Suisses arrived too late to save the factory, but in dispersing the pillagers many were wounded and killed. This was an ominous prelude to the States General, for the authorities had proved weak and undecided, the people violent and unreasonable.

Nor was the foreign policy of the government strong or wise. By hesitation and compromise the prestige won by the American victories had been lost. France had stood aloof from her ally, Turkey, had let Russia take the Crimea, and her mediation had been refused by the Empress. Holland had been deserted, also, where the States had counted on the protection of France, that had stood by passively and allowed the Prince of Orange, aided by Prussia and England, to become an absolute monarch, and to treat Holland like a conquered country. For Loménie had no money for troops to sustain the honor of his country and the liberty of her ally. All these humiliations doubtless lay heavy on Madame Roland's heart, but they do not explain why the assembling of the long-hoped-for States General left her still cold and incredulous.

My own opinion is that Madame Roland distrusted this first revolution because it was the work of the nobles. It was an aristocratic movement, and in reforms by those who had most need of reformation she had no faith. Even with the double representation of the Third Estate, she was still mistrustful of the good faith of the King and the privileged classes. This distrust, curiously enough, has been made a reproach to her, as though it were not justified by every act of the monarch and the aristocrats that fol-

lowed the opening of the States General. What all France suspected only after repeated proofs of unfair dealing Madame Roland foresaw. By divination or woman's intuition? No, by the application of general principles, by her knowledge of character, her study of the past, her *bourgeois* good sense. Enthusiast as she was by temperament, reason and experience proved to her that those by whom offenses come cannot extirpate those offenses. The pressure for reform of high-seated abuses must come from below. Until the voice of the people was heard Manon stopped her ears against all the privileged contemners of privilege, even against the fiery appeal of Mirabeau: "Peoples, the hour of awakening has sounded. Liberty is knocking at the door; go to meet her." But who was Mirabeau? The worst type of irresponsible aristocrat. A noble, a rake, a venal, unscrupulous pamphleteer, untruthful, dishonest, loose-living—a typical child as well as a victim of the feudal system; a mercenary *condottiere*, hiring out his pen instead of the sword of his Italian ancestors. For the moment he was with the people, but in time of stress would he not turn again to his king or his order? Events justified Manon's distrust.

Was her pen idle through those two momentous months of May and June, during the great trial of strength in the States General? Roland's severe illness bound her to his bedside all through June, but in May she had been free to write, and many of her letters of that time must have perished, for not one has been found. How much had happened to incite her to question her friends in Paris! With ever-growing

interest she must have read of the solemn opening of the States General at Versailles on the 5th of May, the retirement of the privileged classes, the nobility and clergy, to verify their credentials apart on May 6; the refusal of the Third Estate to proceed to such verification alone; its resolution not to consider itself constituted, or to begin its labors before junction with the other orders, and its decision that its sittings should be public and its debates reported by the press.

In June, in her husband's sick-room, Manon must have followed through the newspapers "the greatest constitutional struggle that has ever been fought out in the world by speech alone." History was quickly made in those longest days of the year. On June 10 the trenchant Siéyès struck at the root the longest line of kings in Europe. On June 12 the last summons of the Third Estate to the nobles and clergy was sent, and ignored, and on the following day that body began the verification of its powers alone. On June 17, sanctioned by public opinion, the Third Order named itself "The National Assembly"; "*L'État c'est nous*" announced these black-robed deputies, who, purposely humiliated by being obliged to wear a kind of sombre livery, found themselves "appropriately dressed to conduct the funeral of royalty" (Gaulot). Hardly had the lower clergy ("mere Commons in Curates' frocks") joined the Third Estate, when they all found themselves shut out from their meeting-place like disgraced schoolboys, and forced to take refuge in the bare tennis-court of Versailles (June 20). The solemn covenant there, the oath not to separate until a new

constitution had been made, and the rights of the people assured, surely fired Manon's heart.

Her suspicions, however, were soon justified. A futile *Séance Royale* (June 23) followed the Oath. The King's belated concessions in those Thirty-five Articles, which granted three months before would have been received with affectionate gratitude, roused no enthusiasm; his arbitrary command to the Three Orders to vote separately, for if they did not, "*seul je ferai le bien de mon peuple*," proved mere *brutum fulmen*. Mirabeau became the true Thunderer, and his bolt seared not only poor messenger De Brézé but royalty as well.

The worsted King, after many of the nobles and the majority of the prelates had gone over to the Assembly, now national, indeed, revoked his former speech, and besought rather than commanded nobles and clergy to join the Third Estate (June 27), apparently acknowledging its authority. *Apparently* only, and to gain time, for in the last days of June and the first weeks of July there were ominous assemblings of foreign regiments and strange soldiers—Swiss, Alsatians, Walloons—seen in Paris suburbs. Ten regiments were summoned to overawe the capital, for the city had promised to sustain the Assembly, and the troops at hand would not move against the national representatives. Artois assured one of his friends that the King's submission to the popular will would last only until his forces were concentrated, and added that "many heads must fall."

It has been lightly asserted and ineptly repeated that the monarchy was destroyed through its clem-

ency. On the contrary, the King and the court essayed force again and again, and perished because the army would not attack the people. The King, when asked by Mirabeau to dismiss the troops and quiet suspicion, declined to do so, and proposed instead to despatch the Assembly to Soissons or Noyon. The deputies, naturally enough, did not accept the offer to send them away from Paris, and "to place them between two camps" (Thiers). Vague fears of a *coup d'état* hardened into certainty when it was known that Necker had been secretly dismissed, and hurried away on the preceding day. For Necker had suspected that the intention of the court was to unite at Compiègne all the members of the Three Orders who had not favored the innovations; to make them consent in haste to all the taxes and loans that it (the court) needed, and then to dismiss them (Madame de Staël).

CHAPTER XIV

"LA REVOLUTION VINT ET NOUS ENFLAMMA"

How the Parisian democracy saved the Assembly and the people, the stirring story of the 14th and 15th of July, has been told by tongues of flame and written in letters of gold; even to-day it hurries heart-beats. All the world knows of the acts that moved the world. It is easy to fancy in what a fever of excitement Manon, still tremulous from Roland's recent peril, received the amazing tidings; every courier brought a new wonder, for events gained hourly on his foaming horses. The news of the rising of the people, the fall of the Bastille, the retreat of the foreign troops, was hardly read when fresh wonders pressed hard on its flank. "Paris conquers her king, Philosopher Bailly is appointed mayor, Republican Lafayette invents the tricolor that will go round the globe" (July 15), and the Assembly elects a commission of eight to draw up a constitution on the English model. Absolutism crumbles in a day with its stronghold. If after more than a century the mere record of the swift march of these amazing events finds an echoing beat in the reader's blood, how must it then have fired the hearts of Frenchmen!

Did Manon believe that the dreams of her youth were growing into radiant realities, that the Saturnian reign had begun, as she thrilled over the taking of the

Bastille or the tranquil courage of the Assembly, quietly planning a constitution under the guns of foreign mercenaries? With these high deeds in mind, it is bewildering to read her first letter after the people's victory.

July 26.

"No, you are *not* free; no one is so yet. The confidence of the public is betrayed, letters are intercepted. You complain of my silence; I write you by every mail; it is true that I no longer chat with you about my own business; who is the traitor that to-day has any other than that of the nation? It is true that I have advised stronger measures than have been adopted, and meantime, if you are not vigilant, yours will only have been a raising aloft of shields. Neither have I received the letter from you that our friend Lanthenas tells me of. You send me no news, and there should be masses of it. You are busying yourself with municipal affairs, and you are letting go free heads that are plotting new horrors. You are no more than children; your enthusiasm is a fire of straw, and if the National Assembly does not formally institute proceedings against two illustrious heads, or some generous Decius does not strike at them, you are all damned. If this letter does not reach you, may the cowards who read it blush on learning that it is from a woman, and tremble while reflecting that she can make a hundred enthusiasts who will inspire a million more."

Truly Manon had awakened, and like a soldier roused by sudden alarm, had awakened seizing a sword.

This was strange language for a polished woman, strange aggressiveness for a reasonable woman, strange violence for a kindly woman. This letter, the deadliest document of Madame Roland's detractors, reads like a hysterical outbreak; as though Roland's long illness, with its jading alternation of hope and despair, and the tense excitement of the last two months, had exasperated her nerves and deflected her vision.

Documents, however, can lie as well as figures, when isolated and cut out from their place in the sequence of events that they illustrate or recount. The date of a paper is as important as its contents. There was cause, grim cause, for Madame Roland's protests and appeals. On the 26th of July the Saturnian reign was already over. If on the 15th of July Louis XVI had accepted the Revolution, on the next day his brothers had emigrated, and the desertion of their King and their country by the nobles began by the flight of the Polignacs. The foreign regiments were *not* remanded; they remained a menace to liberty. Even the moderates among the revolutionists, who feared another court plot, petitioned for the punishment of the authors of the attempted *coup d'état*. Respectable *bourgeois* not far from Lyons were writing the King "to make *a terrible example* of those who had deceived him," *i. e.*, the Queen and the princes, his brothers. Just suspicion soon quickened into panic. Châteaux were burned, troops of brigands appeared in the country, dreadful rumors were rife of plots at court, of ships bringing corn to hungry France attacked by English pirates hired by the Queen and Artois. The long reign of *La Grande Peur* had already

begun. The belief that the court was cozening the people, which facts had proved well founded, was spreading over the country, and with it a contempt for the authority that was at once unworthy of respect and impotent to enforce its will.

The men who had played the new game of politics honestly, who had prepared their *cahiers* in a reasonable, conciliatory spirit, who had believed in the good faith of the King, who had hoped and trusted, who had counted on a reform of crying abuses, found that after all the fair words and large promises they were assembled for the sole purpose of squeezing money from the people. The tone of angry suspicion in Madame Roland's letter was universal in an indignant France.

Angry and suspicious as Manon was, fear had no part in her, and on July 29 she left Lyons to guard Le Clos, which she deemed in danger from the brigands, whence she wrote reassuringly to Brissot, who published her letter in his paper, Le Patriote français. "Three or four little lords had intrenched themselves in their châteaux with cannon, guns, and ammunition, seconded by certain brigands who had escaped from Lyons. A dozen of them were arrested at Villefranche. Thereupon one of the 'little lords' had come with ten mounted followers, sabre in hand, to ask for the release of their comrades. They had been met by the people and had disappeared in a hurry."

All through the agitated summer of 1789 Roland, barely convalescent, and his wife, while working on the third volume of the Dictionnaire, begged for news of the Assembly, and followed its proceedings with critical, sometimes hostile, interest. Their suspicions of the

Court's double-dealing did not abate. Manon had sneered at the enthusiasm of the deputies when the King and the Queen, with the dauphin in her arms, had visited it on July 15. "I am convinced that half the Assembly was foolish enough to be touched at the sight of Antoinette recommending her son to them. Morbleu! It may well be a question of a child. It is one of the welfare of twenty millions of men. All is lost if we are not on our guard." From the mother of Eudora this sounds harsh; from the patriot it is a just observation.

Like Charlotte Corday, Manon had been "a republican long before the Revolution." She had stood aloof, hoping little from a movement led by nobles. In the cannon of the besiegers of the Bastille she heard at last the *vox populi*. Her surrender was as complete as her resistance had been prolonged. Her capitulation was unconditional. "*La Révolution vint*," and conquered. Madame Roland had not sought it; she was not one of the many brilliant, intellectual people who, without work, position, or means, sought in the new movement a *moyen de parvenir*, a means of getting what they lacked, of carving out a career or a fortune from the great upheaval. No, Madame Roland gave herself to what she believed to be the cause of liberty and of justice. To it she consecrated her life and the lives of those dearest to her. From her childhood she had sought an ideal worthy of the complete immolation of self. The dominant motive of her life had been devotion. As a child she had longed to dedicate herself to God. Her girlhood was consecrated to the cult of friendship; as a maiden she

STATUE OF MADAME ROLAND

From the study for the statue of Madame Roland which is now in a niche on the southern side of the exterior of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris

had sacrificed all worldly consideration to an ideal of love. The rather dreary drudgery of her married life her warmth of heart and imagination had transmuted into cheerful occupation. Motherhood had brought an even deeper oblivion of herself, and now in this new passion of patriotism, this enthralling inner vision of a fatherland, beneficent as powerful, all the older loves seemed fused in one overmastering passion. To the woman who had wept because she was not born a Spartan or a Roman, who had looked with longing, envious eyes at England and Switzerland, hope had come like the angel of the Annunciation. "Behold thy handmaid," Madame Roland had answered to the divine summons.

For the Revolution was a religion, not only to its leaders, but to all those, however obscure, who suffered and fought for it. It inspired the same devotion, the same sense of consecration, the same indifference to side-issues and minor details, and the same insensibility to pain, in self and in others. Like all new creeds, the Revolution had its fanaticisms and its cruelties, its bigots and fanatics, its schisms and heresies, its martyrs and confessors, its inquisitors and warrior-saints. These were yet to come in those early days of the faith in '89 and '90, days of love-feasts and fraternal rejoicings.

The hope, the sense of personal value that Christianity revealed to materialized paganism, the new doctrine of the rights of man brought to the French people! What! These human heads of cattle, good only to starve and toil in the fields for their masters, or to bleed in battle for a wanton's quarrel or a king's

greed, were then to *count* for something? They were to *own* something, these serfs who could not draw a draft of water nor grind a handful of wheat save at their lord's fountain or mill. These mute millions were to speak for themselves. They were men, fellow men, the new gospel proclaimed. This good news sustained them while they starved and suffered, and inspired a new sense of human dignity. Far more impressive than any political achievement was the kindling of hope in cold and faint hearts. Necker, after three weeks of exile, hardly recognized the same people. Dusauty, who had lived forty years under the ancient régime, noted that old France disappeared in a few days. "Everything is changed." All the young men were armed and drilling; men of eighty mounted guard with their great-grandsons. "Who would have believed," they said to him, "that we should die free?" "The Revolution, all imperfect as it is," Madame Roland wrote Brissot, "has changed the face of France. It has developed in it a character, and we had none."

Michelet has recorded in pages glowing with virile tenderness the daily and hourly offerings of the poor citizens to the *patria*. Too little is known of this heroism of the humble. The public acts of the Revolution, sublime or terrible, that followed swiftly have overshadowed the countless individual sacrifices that marked each day of its beginnings. Hope and faith sustained the people in face of a dissembling king, a hostile court, blighted harvests, and increasing disorders. For the first to abuse enlarged freedom was rascaldom, of course, and lovers of order had to look

on helplessly at outbreaks of violence and lawlessness. In the two months that followed the storming of the Bastille the country people followed the Parisians' example, and shattered towers and ruined donjons still mark their zeal. It was natural enough that the castle where those yellow parchments were hoarded that gave the lord mysterious power over the peasant should be the first sacrifice to Jacques Bonhomme's new liberty. But, though they hated the aristocracy, all Frenchmen, even Robespierre and Marat, were royalists. The nation clung to its old idol, and excused the King's tergiversations and bad faith by persuading itself that he was deceived, that he did not know what he was signing every day. He, poor man, was in the toils of his maleficent Queen. It was only against the robber nobles, his immediate oppressors, that the peasant armed himself with scythe and torch, not against the "good" King. Even the Rolands and their kind ascribed the court plots to the Queen and the Princes, and believed that "Louis XVI wishes to do right." Many acts of treachery, irrefragable proofs of double dealing were required to destroy the love and confidence of the people.

As lawlessness increased "it became urgent to forestall a Jacquerie by a revolution," as Duruy has pithily put it. The nobles proposed to sell their proprietary and abolish their personal rights over the peasantry on their estates. On the famous night of August 4, 1789, nobles and ecclesiastics, provinces and towns, renounced their ancient privileges. In a few hours feudalism vanished and equality was born. A declaration of rights very naturally followed the abolition

of privileges, and on August 26 the Droits de l'Homme appeared, the last act that the Assembly performed in harmony. There was little harmony elsewhere during the attempted adjustment of conflicting claims, and the sale of privileges and church-lands which followed the renunciations of August 4, and the Rolands passed an agitated summer.

News of the death of Canon Bimont, Manon's "dear little uncle," who, she had hoped, would some day sit at her fireside, reached her in the early autumn. She had no time to mourn. Troops had been again assembled at Versailles. On October 1 they had been feasted and wined by the court to excite them against the people, and the arrest and imprisonment of the members of the Assembly was hourly expected. The news of the banquet in the Orangerie had just reached Madame Roland when she wrote Bosc on October 6. This letter, evidently dashed off in great anxiety and indignation, affords a curious instance of her political sagacity. She advises, as a measure of public safety the immediate transference of the King and the Assembly to Paris at the very time when the hungry Parisian housewives, a drabbled and dishevelled escort, were bringing the royal family to the capital. "A plan must be made to carry off the deputies, and transfer them to Paris under the guard of the nation, that they may work at the constitution without interruption. I say, carry them off, for though it is their part to remain like Roman senators of old at their posts, it is the duty of the nation to watch over their safety, to cover them with its ægis, and to surround them with its protection." The letter is filled with other sug-

gestions, many of which soon afterwards became measures, viz.: the abolition of *octrois* and *douanes*, the appointment of special committees to consider ways and means of supplying food quickly and economically to the large towns, the founding of a public pay-office to cut off funds from the treacherous court, and the establishment of a national guard drawn from all the provinces to repress local disorders and incite patriotic feeling.

A P. S. is too characteristic of the nation and the period to be omitted. "If the theatres of the capital remain open, as is to be assumed, the vigilance of the citizens should be extended to them. They should be allowed to give only the plays that nourish sentiments appropriate to our circumstances; several of the great Corneille, but not Cinna; the Brutus of Voltaire, his Catiline, his Death of Cæsar, etc. Nothing is to be neglected in the regeneration of a whole nation. This same care should extend over the smaller theatres; from them should be withdrawn whatever maintains or stimulates luxury, immorality, or slavery." Manon's exaltation, it will be observed, took a practical form.

Both her enthusiasms and her acquaintance with the political situation were sustained and extended by her correspondence with two new friends, Brissot de Warville and Bancal des Issarts.

At the same time her letters treating of national affairs and all aglow with patriotic feeling began to find their way to a larger public. A young lawyer, Luc Antoine de Rosière Champagneux, who had left his native Dauphiné and settled in Lyons, published

many of the Rolands' letters in his paper, Le Courier de Lyon. It was with him that on May 30, 1790, Madame Roland watched the sixty thousand national guards who had come from all the neighboring country to celebrate the feast of the Federation, defile along the quays of the Rhone. With fire and water in her eyes Manon saw them pass, and with them marched an ideal made flesh, that fraternity of man vainly preached by Pagan stoic and Christian apostle alike. Here, as she looked, the miracle came to pass; the narrow hatreds of province for province, the fierce hostilities of town to town wavered, softened, melted away before a mighty inrush of brotherly love, of passion for a common *patria*. Aflame with enthusiasm, Manon wrote the story of the great day, and Champagneux published it unsigned, in his newspaper. "We printed more than sixty thousand of it," he says; "each *fédéré* wished to carry one home with him." Parisian and provincial journals copied the article, long extracts appeared in the Patriote français, Camille Desmoulins reprinted it *in extenso*, and it was published as a pamphlet. If, as Michelet says, "each *fédéré* carried away with him something of the soul of Madame Roland," her impassioned idealism awoke an answering vibration in many thousand hearts all over France. She herself does not mention this article in her Memoirs, and there are only slight references to her journalistic work in her letters.

She considered Champagneux somewhat lacking in courage, and though he was honorable (*honnête*) he was too plausible, too discreet, quite to reach her Spartan standard. Her estimate proved to be just,

PORTRAIT OF BRISSOT

during the Terror, though she seemed somewhat exacting when she wrote of his editorial caution: "*Foin de ces héros de chambre qui tremblent dans la première rue.*"

The courage of her new friend Brissot was above reproach, but no political leader has ever been so blackened by persistent malice and envenomed party spirit. "It was I who killed him with my book," sobbed Camille Desmoulins when Brissot was condemned. Camille was even more guilty than he suspected; he had murdered Brissot's good name. "*Calomniez, calomniez toujours; il en restera quelque chose,*" said Beaumarchais, well qualified to judge of the force of persevering slander, and "Brissot, the courageous publicist and honorable man" (Perroud), is a typical example of its enduring blight.

The rehabilitation of his memory would be an attractive task, but mine is limited to mentioning briefly his relations with the Rolands. Already in 1787 Brissot had cited Roland's Italian Journey, and several of his articles in the Encyclopédie, with approving commentary in his Study of the American Revolution. Roland, who had not been spoiled by over-praise, wrote a word of thanks for the kindly appreciation, and an exchange of courtesies followed between the two authors. The following year (1788) Brissot went to America with Clavière, to treat with Congress for the French debt, and on his return to Paris he founded a newspaper, Le Patriote français. The Rolands and their friends were among his collaborators. Madame Roland, as usual, soon became her husband's substitute. She says in her Memoirs: "My letters, full of enthusiasm, pleased Brissot, who often printed ex-

tracts from them in his paper, where I found them with pleasure. These frequent communications united us in friendship." Indeed, they were comrades in arms when they met in Paris in 1791.

CHAPTER XV

BANCAL DES ISSARTS

JEAN HENRI BANCAL DES ISSARTS was also a contributor to Brissot's paper, and a member of Brissot's abolitionist club, Les Amis des Noirs. Like Lanthenas and Bosc, he was a zealous worker in the secret societies that smoothed the path of the Revolution. The youngest son of a prosperous merchant of Clermont Ferrand, Bancal had studied at the University of Orleans, and bought a notary's practice in Paris. There his new environment, the new atmosphere pollent with new ideas, and contact with new friends turned his thoughts towards a career in politics or philanthropy. In 1788 he sold his office, wrote a Declaration of Rights, and made a tour through Auvergne expounding and spreading the new gospel. On his return to Paris he was named elector for his district of Saint Eustache (April 21, 1789). He was a foreground figure in the momentous scenes of July, and ultimately became Brissot's lieutenant. In November Auvergne named him as one of her envoys to the Assembly. He was in the vanguard of the innovators, and one of the founders of the Jacobin Club, when a slight check to his political ambitions completely changed his aims. The rôle of peripatetic apostle of the new doctrines suddenly allured him and, abandoning Paris, he set out for the south of France. There he was not only to sow the good seed, but, combining the labors of the

missionary with those of a real-estate agent, he was to keep a watchful eye on any especially likely piece of ecclesiastical property (then become national) for sale. Bancal had enthusiastically entered into Lanthenas's scheme for a community life of kindred minds, like that of the Moravian Brothers. Brissot, Bosc, and the Rolands, as well as the English Quaker Piggott, of republican ideals, were all interested in the project, which was somewhat prosaically called the "Agricultural Society." The vast domains of the clergy had just been put on the market by the decree of the Assembly, March 20, and the little group of friends hoped to acquire an estate held in common, where they might cultivate their fields and their minds, divide the work and the profits, and lead the simple life, pleasantly flavored with intellectual interests and literary pursuits.

On his way south Bancal was to visit the Rolands, whom he had never met, though he and Madame had already exchanged letters. She had begun the correspondence with a cordial though rather studied letter (June 22, 1790), introducing herself and her husband to Bancal as members of the little coterie in Paris, inviting him to Le Clos, and referring to the project, then very much to the fore, of the community life. Politic as the letter was, its tone was indicative of the sentiments that were already shaping the forms of polite intercourse. "Since Frenchmen have gained a country, between those who are worthy of this blessing there should be a tie that draws them together in spite of distance, and unites them in the same cause. A friend of the Revolution cannot be a stranger to any

one who loves the Revolution, and who desires to contribute to its complete success." This was Manon's *entrée en matière*. She ended her letter with a very clear-sighted observation on the political conditions in Lyons, and a sentence that shows her enthusiasm had not deflected her view of realities. "A generation must pass away before the scars of the fetters that the people have worn so long disappear, and before the self-respect is born that renders man equal to his liberty, and protects him and it."

These reflections and the earnestness in the writer that they implied did not frighten away Bancal. He accepted the invitation, and during the first week in July he and the Rolands rode out from Lyons to the Clos, where he spent a few delightful days and promised to return in the summer. Bancal was a new type of humanity to Madame Roland. He was at once more a man of business and of the world than Lanthenas, more introspective and philosophical than Bosc, more polished and considerate than Roland. Bancal's love of liberty and devotion to the public good were tinged with exaltation, and consequently subject to an occasional melancholy reaction. Indeed, a tendency to depression tempered the ardent vitality of his mature manhood. At crucial moments a slight hesitation between warring ideals was apt not to arrest but to delay his decisions. But this predominance of reflection over action was so slight, and generally accompanied with such delicate consideration for not only the rights but the feelings of others, that it took on the air of renunciation rather than of indecision. A comfortable fortune had furthered his dis-

interestedness and stimulated his natural generosity, and in the little coterie he filled the rôle of a modest Mæcenas.

To this sensitive, high-minded man Manon proved irresistible. Bancal was subjugated at once. And Manon? She was used to rousing emotional as well as intellectual interest. The evident admiration of this accomplished and polished person she accepted quite naturally at first. He seemed to be but paying the customary tribute to her queenship, like the other house friends over whom she reigned so sweetly and playfully.

A brisk correspondence followed Bancal's first visit. Manon's letters were sent first to Bosc, who showed them to Brissot and others of his friends in Paris, then franked them and forwarded them to Bancal, who obtained final possession of them. They form a curious *mélange* of political and local news, philosophical reflections, and friendly, almost affectionate messages.

The local news was exciting, at times alarming. The disorganization of the whole administrative machine continued. With a discredited executive and a general lack of respect for authority, disorders naturally increased in the Lyonnais as they had in Paris, and throughout the country. Patriot and Royalist alike were dissatisfied with the delays, many of them wise, and the compromises, some of them statesmanlike, of the National Assembly. The nobility, clergy, and the higher *bourgeoisie* grew colder towards the Revolution. To its partisans they ascribed the increasing lawlessness and the universal insecurity; they foresaw

a general overturn (*culbute générale*) if order was not promptly restored. The generous outburst of feeling that had inspired the acts of the 4th of August, the noble passion for justice, for rendering unto the people what belonged to the people, had shrunk into a grudging assent to a hard political necessity. The task in hours of gladness willed was being fulfilled in months of deepest gloom. The sale of ecclesiastical property augmented the discontent and alarm of the erstwhile privileged classes, and many sincerely believed that the salvation of France lay in a return to absolutism.

Roland's sympathy with the artisan, his resolute and whole-hearted support of the Revolution was regarded as treachery to his own order. He was denounced as an agitator and a demagogue, and his wife shared his unpopularity. Prejudice and injustice were unfortunately not exclusively Royalist; the Revolutionists also had grown embittered and suspicious. Every act of violence was imputed by them to the machinations of aristocrats trying to discredit the government; every uprising had been factitiously fomented by the agents of the court as a pretext for calling in troops to terrorize the people. Mistrust was general and was manifested sometimes tragically, often comically.

Madame Roland has been censured by one of her ablest biographers for her constant apprehension of a counter-revolution or of an armed invasion, for her appeals to the Revolutionary deputies and her insisting on perpetual vigilance. The papers found on a Royalist emissary arrested at Bourgoin proved the existence of a plot formidable enough to justify her fears. These

letters showed that Artois was to invade Burgundy, the King was to escape from Paris and join him at Lyons, where, aided by foreign arms, the old régime was to be re-established. Madame Roland was not afraid of shadows. She was not a Cassandra predicting woe and defeat. Her letters to the "Triumvirate," as she called the three friends, Bancal, Bosc, and Lanthenas, were trumpet-calls to civic courage, spirited incitements to action. If she mourned over the edict of the Assembly, limiting the liberty of the press, if she very sensibly pleaded for an accounting of the expenditure of public moneys, "*toujours des millions, et jamais des comptes*," if she believed that "security is the tomb of liberty," and that "indulgence to men in authority tempts them to tyranny," it was not because her faith in the principles of the Revolution and in the inherent justice of it ever faltered. If to-day she seems overcredulous in her minute reports of the rumors, accusations, refutations, charges, and countercharges that harassed Lyons throughout the summer of 1790, the real dangers of the situation and the constant menace of foreign invasion should be borne in mind. Manon did not fear for herself; her terrors were for the loss of liberty, for the return of the old vassalage and the old abuses. And there are brave and wise words in her letters worthy of the child of Plutarch: "*Quand on ne s'est pas habitué à identifier son intérêt et sa gloire avec le bien et la splendeur du général, on va toujours petitement, se recherchant soi-même, et perdant de vue le but auquel on devroit tendre.*"

"There is no example of the peaceful regeneration of an empire; it is probably an illusion. Adversity is

the school of nations as of man, and I believe that we must be purified by it to be worthy. What shall we do? Fight with courage and constancy. . . . Combat for combat, is it not sweeter to fight for the happiness of a whole nation than for one's own private felicity? Is the life of the sage in society anything but a continual battle against prejudice and passions? . . . They [the Royalists] will struggle in vain; blood will be shed but tyranny will not be re-established. Its iron throne is shaken throughout Europe, and the efforts of potentates only hasten its destruction. Let it fall. Even should we remain under its ruins a new generation will arise to enjoy the liberty that we have won for it, and to bless our efforts." "Either one must watch and preach till one's last breath or have nothing to do with revolution." These are brave words, but behind the sentences there is a courageous woman. The heroic fibre is sometimes a little hard, and the patriot is forced to be indifferent to the pain of others as well as to her own. In pursuing a straight line of action obstacles are more often destroyed than turned, and some gentle and delicate things are trodden down in the onward march. Madame Roland's impatience of half-measures is not always statesmanlike. In the present instance her dissatisfaction with the Assembly was justifiable; a conservative reaction had set in that threatened the liberties won during the past year.

Between the storms France enjoyed some halcyon days, those of the Federation. From Paris Bancal had written of the great fête on the Champ de Mars. "There is a certain canto [sic] in the Iliad that threw me into a fever when I first read it; your description

has done as much," Manon assured Bancal. However, Roland regretted that the *fédérés* should have kissed the dauphin's hand, but Manon was not displeased at the unsympathetic attitude of the King; it would prevent him from profiting by the immense upwelling of love and enthusiasm that overflowed French hearts at this feast of fraternity.

Meantime Lyons was in a ferment. A measure that Roland had ardently advocated, the suppression of the *octrois*, had been passed by the municipal government on July 10. On July 13 the decree was rescinded by the Assembly, influenced by the remonstrances of the tax-farmers. The *octrois* had weighed heavily on the working people of Lyons, and the abolition of them had caused much rejoicing. Their re-establishment was immediately followed by an uprising, promptly crushed by troops, who then occupied the town. The revolutionists feared that the riot was deliberately instigated by the aristocrats to serve as a pretext for quartering foreign regiments in Lyons to aid a Royalist invasion from Savoy.

Although Roland was at Le Clos during the disturbance, he was accused of fomenting it. Belonging by birth to the nobility, by sympathy to the people, and by his activities to the *bourgeoisie*, Roland had enemies as well as friends in all classes. To reconnoitre, and to investigate the case against him, Madame Roland left the Clos on August 4, and rode to Lyons alone. "I don't care to have my husband go back to Lyons," she wrote Bancal; "an honest man is as quickly hanged as any one, and though it is glorious to die for one's country, it is not so to swing from a lamp-

post. . . . As it is not yet the custom to hang women to lamp-posts, I shall direct my palfrey towards town to-morrow, Friday." She was hardly known in Lyons, where Roland was often taken for an abbé on account of his simple dress and grave manner, and, therefore, ran little risk in visiting it. On the evening of her arrival she wrote to Bancal that she had found the red flag floating over the town hall and the city under martial law. Foreign regiments were expected "to overawe the people," said the Royalists, "to facilitate the entrance of a Sardinian army with Artois at its head," whispered the patriots, and their surmise proved correct when Artois's emissary was captured a little later. Manon was in despair; "the counter-revolution has begun." "The town is a sewer of the filth of the old régime." One hope remained: the national militia of Dauphiné was to guard the frontier of Savoy. Her own grievance faded away beside the deeper anxieties, the hunger and misery of the people. She heard some vague accusations against Roland, but nothing precise, nothing that could be taken up and confuted. "We cannot abase ourselves to run after calumny; we cannot pursue reptiles," she wrote proudly. "I should not take it ill if we were called to the bar of the National Assembly. Our friend [Roland] would be like Scipio before the assembly of the people."

In Villefranche, however, the most absurd rumors were rife. The town buzzed with gossip; accompanied by a woman whom in reality she had never met, Manon was reported to have visited the garrets of Lyons to bribe the outcasts of the city to riot; on one important occasion the commandant of the national guards was

not on duty "because he was at the feet of Madame Roland," slanderers averred, though she did not know him and was at Le Clos at the time. These were but old tales new vamped. The Abbé Guillon, credulous, as a typical *mauvaise langue* is apt to be, gravely reports that when Roland was a candidate for municipal office in 1789, he frequented low pot-houses in disguise, got drunk with the workmen, begged for votes, and distributed incendiary pamphlets!

Although the false reports about herself did not ruffle Manon, and she took no steps to refute them—"to justify a woman is almost always to compromise her," "I shall be washed white when the innocence of my husband is proved"—she was angered by her brother-in-law, the canon's, momentary belief in them. "If any one had told me that through fanaticism you had murdered your brother I should have immediately rejected the stupid tale, notwithstanding my knowledge of your opinions," she exclaimed indignantly. "You are wrong," replied the ecclesiastic, to whom the comparison could not have been ingratiating; "one can only answer for one's self, and cannot always do that." "Truly," returned Manon. "I see that in Alexander's place you would not have taken the potion from Philip. Also," she added mentally, "you are not a hero" (July 28). Poor Manon found few of them outside of book covers.

Two days later (August 30) Bancal and Lanthenas arrived at Le Clos for the long-promised visit. It proved a pleasant one. Though Manon told Bosc that the little company paid more attention to the songs of the birds than the decrees of the legists, and every-

body wrote all the mornings in busy solitude, the afternoons were spent together. The friends explored the woods, preached to the peasants, played battledore and shuttlecock, argued with the curé, planned a political and educational campaign, and talked over the details of their future life in common. This Utopian scheme was gradually abandoned as interest in national affairs deepened, and Brook Farm had no French predecessor; the project was, however, seriously discussed all through the summer and autumn.

During the *villeggiatura* at Le Clos, Bancal's admiration of Manon had grown with proximity. She was at her best in the country, more spontaneous, more carefree. Something of the gay *abandon* of the south and the season relaxed her habitual strenuousness and heightened her glowing vitality. Beautiful, judged by classic canon or conventional standard, she was not, but the charm of Manon's bright face illumined by the radiant energy of her intelligence, of her look, vivid as a flame, the magic of her mellow voice, vibrating deliciously when she was stirred by some hope for the future, some wrong or shame of the present, every man who knew her well has acknowledged. And Bancal's immediate surrender to the spell of her fervent personality was followed by a nobler capitulation to her courage, her impassioned interest in abstract questions of right and duty, her mental integrity that never tried to elude the conclusions of straight reasoning, and suffered no compromise with consequences. A woman who induces a man's feeling for her to run in the same channel with his finer enthusiasms inspires devotion, even when she does not confer happiness.

But to love a woman wedded to duty is to forswear felicity; Bancal left Le Clos on October 2, agitated and melancholy, and Manon's first letter to him afterwards was incoherent and "adorably imprudent," Michelet says. What had happened to tinge with warmer color the lucid crystal of their friendship? Probably some betrayal on Bancal's part of a deeper feeling than Manon's confiding affection for him authorized had touched and distressed her. She had already warned him that her friendship must be based on esteem, and that his high ideals were the source and guaranty of their mutual attachment. Such a notice to trespassers was in nowise fatuous in a period of almost obligatory gallantry, when a gentleman who found himself alone with a lady and did not pay court to her was considered ill bred. Bancal was a man of social experience, a word to the worldly wise was not amiss, so Manon had early in their acquaintance sent him a gentle *caveat* (August 4, 1790): "At sunrise to-day I left my solitude and *mon ami* (Roland). How pleasant it was in the woods to give myself up to the sight of nature awakening from sleep! I often thought of you as I passed over the road we travelled together. You are called to know all that can be known of happiness in this world, for you feel the price of virtue; there is nothing beyond that! But it is not of this that I wish to write you." This prettily veiled admonition, a manifest *hors d'œuvre*, was followed by a straightforward account of Manon's eventful day in Lyons (August 4).

Two months later her sunny tranquillity was troubled. Evidently Bancal was more redoubtable than

Bosc and Lanthenas had been, whose boyish affection Manon's tact and wisdom had transmuted into disinterested and devoted friendship. The elder-sisterly, half-laughing, half-scolding tone would be quite out of place with Bancal, who was her senior, and a man of the world. The strictest of women is apt to look indulgently on the victim of her attractions, even when she is not moved to reciprocal tenderness, and there is no doubt that Manon for a time, at least, was affected by Bancal's infatuation.

Immediately after leaving Le Clos, Bancal wrote Roland, urging a realization of the project of a life in common. Roland answered cordially, and sent on the letter to Manon. Bancal's eagerness, and perhaps the intimate satisfaction she felt in it, startled her. The prospect of daily contact with a sympathetic man who had, perhaps, betrayed the ardor of his feeling for her, seemed too pleasant to be safe. Roland's absolute confidence imposed flawless loyalty. Bancal was a friend, beloved by both husband and wife. He must continue to be so, and Manon desired to dismiss the would-be lover but to keep the friend. Her methods are open to criticism; their results were admirable. She wrote Bancal straight from her heart, confessed her fears, declared her belief in his honor, made him the guardian of their conduct by leaving everything in his hands, and mingling dovelike candor with ophidian sagacity, forbade him to hope while bidding him not to despair.

Peals of thunder were rolling from hill to hill, the air grew black and heavy, while Manon wrote. It seems as though the alternate depression and exalta-

tion of nerves relaxed and strung dominated her as she wrote, obscuring her habitual lucidity and deflecting her usual straightforwardness.

"I take up my pen without knowing what it will indite, without deciding what I am going to write. My mind is busy with a thousand ideas that doubtless I should find easier to express if they were accompanied by less agitating feelings. Why are my eyes dimmed by tears that fall only to well up again? My will is upright, my heart is pure, and yet I am not at ease. It will be the charm of our lives, and we shall not be useless to our fellows, you say of the affection that unites us, and these consoling words have not yet restored my peace; it is because I am not sure of your happiness, and I should never forgive myself for having troubled it. It is because I have believed that you have built it, partly at least, on a false basis, on a hope that I ought to forbid. . . . Who can foresee the effect of violent agitations too often renewed? Would they not be dangerous if they had no other effect than the languor that follows them, weakens the moral sense, and leaves it no longer equal to any emergency?

"I am mistaken. You do not experience this unworthy alternation of feeling. You might be sad at times. You would never be weak. The thought of your strength gives me back my own, and I shall taste the happiness that Heaven has allotted to me, believing that it has not permitted me to trouble yours, and has even bestowed on me some means of increasing it. . . . Tell me, or rather let *us* know what you are doing, your projects, what you have learned of public

affairs, and what you propose to do for them." Here Manon sketched a charming picture of Bancal's home-coming to Clermont, and laments his necessity for sacrificing domestic life to duty to the nation. Then, with a sudden return to sentiment: "Why is it that the sheet I am writing cannot be sent to you without mystery? Why can I not show to all eyes what I would dare to offer to Divinity itself? Assuredly I can call Heaven to witness my vows and my intentions. It is sweet to think that it hears, sees me, and judges me. Of what value, then, would be social inconsistencies and human prejudices, through which it is difficult to guide one's heart, if to disdain for empty conventions were not united courage for self-sacrifice, firmness of character, and purity of intention to keep to the straight line of duty?

"When shall we see each other again? A question which I often ask myself, and which I dare not answer. But why do we seek to divine the future that Nature conceals from us? Let us leave it under the imposing veil with which she covers it. . . . We have over it only one influence, a great one, doubtless—to prepare our future happiness by a wise use of the present. . . . Thus, the dearest friends can bear absence because they can consecrate their time to cultivating virtues of which they can give an account to each other. What duties are not made delectable by such a charming obligation? Can we complain of anything in the world when one has a soul to appreciate this privilege? And ought I to have alarms and fears for you who feel it so keenly? No, they are unjust to you. Pardon me those fears which are caused by that tender anxiety

too near to the weakness of a sex whose courage even is not always firm. . . .

"The fine days that we spent here together have not been followed by others like them. The very evening you left the weather changed, and, oddly enough in this season, for the past week we have not had twenty-four hours without thunder. It has just rumbled again. I like the color that it lends to our landscape; it is august and sombre, but even if it were terrible it would not terrify me. The phenomena of nature . . . only offer to a being of feeling, preoccupied with great interests, minor and less important scenes than those of which his own heart is the theatre. Adieu, my friend, it is almost unkind to talk to you when you cannot answer me, but if there is some cruelty in taking this slight advantage you will pardon me."

Twenty days later in another private chat on paper —"*une petite causerie à part*"—Manon had recovered her wonted poise and serenity. Bancal had suddenly decided to visit England, leaving his political career and adjourning his missionary tours indefinitely. He believed, and wisely, perhaps, that souls *do* change with skies, and that the best *remedium amoris* is absence, fresh realms for thought, and new pasture for the eye. Manon divined his reason, and reluctantly approved of it, in a rather sad but courageous letter. Eudora is also to leave home for a convent school, and the critical but fond mother is already suffering the sullen ache of separation from her *petite*, to whose education she would gladly give all the time spent on the Dictionnaire. "To lessen the sorrow that the object of my journey reawakens, I shall take advantage

of it to make some purchases which concern you, since they are to clothe these orphans that you wished to help. I confess that the pleasure of doing good in the name of those who are dear to me cannot be too highly paid. Since destiny weighs the pain of human beings against their pleasure, whoever can love and be useful cannot complain. . . . It is impossible, my dear friend, that we should ever cease to understand each other. Imagination wanders, reason errs, philosophy even deceives itself or us, sometimes, but a true heart turns always towards the truth. I stop here in order to add something to-morrow before sending this letter to the post. It is midnight. I am in the study—where very soon I shall be unable to read alone before retiring. They have dislodged me for this winter. . . . Good-by a thousand times, or, rather, *never* good-by." (October 28.) What thought, what memory caught at her flying pen, what picture filled the space Manon left after the word study? An innocent, even if a tender one, may be safely assumed.

During the quiet months that followed Bancal's departure Manon "found herself" again, and the relations between the friends declined in intensity. Gradually the tone of the letters altered and personal feeling was merged in patriotic emotion. The personal note is often struck, however. Indeed, all Manon's letters show unflagging interest in her correspondents' tasks and opinions, as well as in the news of their daily life. Indeed, the sentiments and thoughts of her friends were more important to her than external facts. As the march of public events quickened in pace, how-

ever, the tone of the letters became more and more political. The transitions were gentle, there was no sudden quenching of the fitful flame of passion which gradually sank into a warm, steadfast glow of amicable regard worthy of friendship's altar.

In Manon's method, if what was partly instinct, partly design, can be so termed, an attack, a tumult of feeling, a brief period of stress and struggle, were but the initial stage of a loyal and devoted comradeship, the novice's probation in the sentimental life. She was extremely susceptible to the pain she caused, perhaps in some instances she overrated it, and lavished an excess of balm on a slight wound. Still she was a better judge of these cases than we can be who can only see them dimly through the faded ink and fallen dust of old letters.

"She had the coquetry of virtue," Dumouriez remarked, a connoisseur of more concrete coquetries, and he was right. Manon desired to please, aimed to attach—*pour le bon motif*—and was bent on the conquest of those she admired and esteemed. She was an adept in the delicate art of attraction, but with her it was a delicate art, not a crude appeal to a primitive instinct. No one of her admirers was not a better man for having loved her. As Circe's potion made brutes of men, Manon's pure spell awoke in them the hero.

It is not difficult to recall an honorable person to reason, but to render duty lovely, and to fix, without pedantry or prudishness, the limits of an attachment is a rare achievement. Manon's warm heart and light hand softened her rigors, but she did not spare them.

She took it for granted that the right was as dear to Bancal as to herself, and by considering him irreproachable she kept him so—absence and other absorbing interests aiding.

In reading a correspondence of the age of Rousseau and sensibility, it is well to consider that the writers revelled in the unreserved expression of their emotions, which one suspects grew in intensity with the effort to portray them. Poor blind Madame du Deffand, old enough to be his grandmother, scared Horace Walpole by the ardor of her letters. The Duchesse de Choiseul, and the Abbé Barthélemy, the recipients of equally affectionate messages, could have reassured the embarrassed Englishman as to the honorability of the marquise's intentions.

Manon was apt to be captivated from time to time by a new interest or a new friend, and for the moment Bancal held the field. She distinguished him from the other members of the triumvirate by occasionally sending him a letter for himself alone, but many of her communications are joint affairs, Roland, Lanthenas, and Bosc writing on the same sheets, or interpolating messages. None of Bancal's replies have been preserved, only his comments on the margins of Manon's letters. In 1835 Henriette, Bancal's eldest daughter, brought these papers to Renuel, who published them with the admirable and now classic "Introduction" of Sainte-Beuve. Many of these letters were misdated; thanks to M. Perroud, they are now correctly arranged, and as useful to the historian as to the biographer.

Bancal's brusque decision to visit England, and his

abandonment of the scheme for the simple life, surprised his friends. He explained his change of plans plausibly enough as a desire to study free institutions at close range and to strengthen the ties between the English society of "Friends of the Revolution" and the French revolutionists. Bancal's ambition had been humbled at the same time that his heart was wounded, for he had not been elected either in Clermont or in Paris to the political office he coveted. Mid-November saw him in London in a circle of liberals: Quakers, Unitarians, and Deists, all reformers and innovators, cosmopolitan in their sympathies, generous in their aims, and friends of New France. In December Bancal's father died, and Manon wrote the bereaved son, who reproached himself bitterly for his absence from home at the time, an exquisite letter informed with what one is tempted to call the logic of the heart. Fearing the effect of grief and loneliness on a sensitive and melancholy temperament in the gloom of an English winter, she had begged him to return to his own family.

Deeply affected by his grief, and playing in all sincerity a woman's favorite part of paraclete, Manon, rather indiscreetly (but whenever was she prudent?), confessed that, though she had silenced every consideration that was not for Bancal's honor and happiness, as dear to her as her own: "Some day I shall show you some things that will cause you little surprise, but which will surely please you. I have not spent the time that has passed in your absence without putting on paper different things intended for you. You will see them in due time, for I have had no thought that

was not worthy of me to express and of you to hear." Also, she had arranged to have the papers sent to him during a sudden illness when she believed herself dangerously ill.

"We have been brought to the same point of view by different ways. The twilight of the tomb is more fitted to reveal truth than the dazzling splendor of the sun. . . . 'There is no more peace for me,' you have dared to say. . . . With an enlightened mind that knows its duties and cannot wander from virtue, and a generous heart that enjoys its exquisite charm, couldst thou be unhappy and pity thyself? No, for then thou wouldst not be thyself, or my friend. Ah! Dare to look your life in the face, count the good things with which you can embellish it, and thou wilt be more just, and give thanks to the gods." (January 26, 1791.)

After this avowal there naturally followed a reaction, a reasonable one, for on the 1st of February Roland had been given a special mission to Paris, and his wife was to accompany him. Manon then feared that her insistence on Bancal's return to France might be misinterpreted, and wrote (February 11, 1791):

"Lanthenas [who had begged Bancal to return to France] wrote you formerly from a heart devoted to the duties of an apostleship that he fills with admirable zeal and forgetfulness of self. He cannot imagine that a French citizen ought to be anywhere but among his brothers, or occupied with anything but serving and enlightening them. While I applaud his conduct, which adds to my esteem for him, I do not adopt his views exclusively. There is more than one way of

being useful, and each one is permitted to choose his own, that for which he is most fitted. . . . I believe this from what you have done, for you have not acted by chance, but have wished as much as any one to serve your country." She advises him to seek counsel of his friends, and ends with a word of warning. "I shall not have the false delicacy to conceal from you that I am going to Paris, and I will push frankness far enough to agree that this circumstance adds much to my scruples in inviting you to return. There is in our situation an infinite number of trifles and shades of meaning that are keenly felt, though they cannot be explained. But what is very clear and what I *can* express frankly is that I should never wish to see you at the expense of the reason that should guide your conduct, and that you had allowed to yield to a passing motive or a partial affection. Remember that if I need the *happiness* of my friends, this happiness is attached for those who feel as we do to absolute irreproachability."

Poor Bancal! This reminder, following a tender missive, was a sharp touch of frost on rebudding flowers of feeling. No wonder that he underlined indignantly the words "*wished* to serve your country," and commented between the lines: "*Wished!* What an expression! When I was an active elector in 1789, member of the first permanent Committee, exposed to all the dangers, all the hardships of the Revolution, when I sat continuously for two days and a night in a Committee of Subsistence that saved Paris from famine; I have done more than *wished*. . . . Can it be forgotten that a member of the Permanent Committee

who created and assembled the National Guard has done more for his country in three days than others could do in years?"

Thus protested the misunderstood and undervalued Bancal, who then decided to remain in England.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

THE PORTRAITS OF MADAME ROLAND

"Was Manon good to look at?" we wondered when she o'ernamed her suitors, for "in speaking of a lady these trifles become important," Gibbon said apologetically before cataloguing Zenobia's attractions. The modern historian is not apologetic. Following Michelet and Taine, he endeavors to reconstruct the appearance and habitat of his subjects. The shell of an exceptional human creature is significant, especially when it belongs to a sex wherein function is largely determined by form. The archæologist and the art critic aid the biographer, and research now scrutinizes marble and bronze, wood and stone, canvas and ivory, as closely as texts and MSS., and of late years some notable additions have been made to the list of authentic portraits of Madame Roland.

She was often sketched by her literary contemporaries, and their descriptions have helped to identify some new discoveries in galleries and private collections. She left a most carefully finished pen portrait of herself; it might seem flattered if her own words were not supplemented and corroborated by those of friends and opponents, who saw her as she saw herself. She was tall rather than short, plump rather than slender, held herself very erect, moved lightly and quickly, and possessed a firm and graceful carriage. Her face was not striking except for its brilliant coloring, its sweetness, and expression. Not a feature was regular, but they were all pleasing. Her mouth was large compared with the conventional rosebud, and more critical than tender, but her smile was radiant, and her teeth well-matched pearls. Her eyes were hazel gray *pers*, like those of Henry IV's Belle Gabrielle, hardly large enough for her own taste, and a trifle prominent; her dark eyebrows, very delicately pencilled, were vivaciously arched. Her nose was the chief

sinner against regularity in her face; it was thick and rather blunt at the end, a witty, curious, loquacious nose, comelier in profile than in full face. Manon's chin was, she confesses, of the type physiognomists, notably her friend Lavater, attribute to the voluptuary, and she adds with a touch of regret: "Indeed, when I combine all the peculiarities of my character, I doubt if ever an individual was more formed for pleasure, or has tasted it so little."

Manon's forehead, generally covered, was high; her complexion was more animated than delicate; even in maturity her wholesome color mantled and paled like a sensitive girl's. Well-rounded arms, elegantly formed hands, with long, dexterous fingers, close this catalogue *raisonné* of her attractions. The poor prisoner counted them as the despoiled sadly compute their stolen riches: "I have lost many of them, especially such as depend upon bloom and plumpness, but those which remain are sufficient to conceal, without any assistance of art, five or six years of my age, and even the persons who see me every day must be told of it to believe me more than two or three and thirty. My portrait has been often drawn, painted, and engraved, but none of these presentments give an idea of my person (the cameo of Langlois is the least bad). It is difficult to seize, because I have more soul than face, more mind than features. An ordinary artist cannot express this; it is probable that he would not see it. My face grows animated in proportion to the interest with which I am inspired. I generally please because I dislike to offend, but it is not granted to all to find me handsome, or to discover my worth. Camille [Desmoulins] was right when he expressed his amazement that 'at my age and with so little beauty' I still had what he called adorers. I have never spoken to him, but it is probable that with a person of his kind I should be cold and silent, if I were not absolutely repellent."

Truly a comprehensive setting forth of the outer woman. Is the painter too complaisant for her model? Others have sketched more slightly the same subject; we can glance at their impressions.

Arthur Young, who saw Madame Roland in December, 1789, wrote vaguely of her that she was young and handsome. Lemontey, who knew her before '89, is less concise.

"Her eyes, the shape of her head, and her hair were remarkably beautiful. Her delicate complexion had a bloom and a color which, joined to her expression of reserve and modesty, made her look much younger than she was. I did not find in her the facile elegance of the Parisian which she attributes to herself in her Memoirs; not that I mean that she was awkward, because what is simple and natural will never lack grace. I remember that the first time that I saw her she realized for me my idea of the little girl of Vevey who turned so many heads, the Julie of J. J. Rousseau. And when I heard her the illusion was still more complete. Madame Roland spoke well, too well. One's vanity would have liked to find something studied in what she said, but hers was simply a too perfect gift of nature. Wit, good sense, propriety of expression, piquant reason, simple grace, flowed without study between teeth of ivory and rosy lips; *force était de s'y résigner.*"

Dumouriez, the colleague of Roland in the Ministry, who saw madame frequently, described her as "a woman between thirty and forty, very blooming, with a most interesting face, and always elegantly dressed" (Memoirs, III). Tissot, a contemporary historian of the Revolution, says of her: "Without being regularly beautiful, Madame Roland had her own kind of beauty; an elegant figure, easy and natural movements, a kind smile, an air of candor and serenity; her large black eyes, full of vivacity, crowned with eyebrows dark like her hair, reflected in their mobile expression all that passed in her heart" (Histoire de la Révolution, Tome III).

Women's portraits of women are generally more realistic than those of men. Madame Roland was sketched by two clever authoresses, who were also her friends and admirers. Madame Sophie Grandchamp's first impression of her was obtained at the Jacobin Club in 1791: "I still see that famous woman seated near a little table, in a riding habit, her black hair cut *à la jockéi* [square across the forehead], her brilliant complexion, her soft yet piercing eyes."

To Helena Williams, the English republican, Madame Roland appeared "tall and well shaped; her air was dignified, and although more than thirty-five years of age, she was still handsome. Her countenance had an expression of uncom-

mon sweetness, and her full dark eyes beamed with the brightest rays of intelligence."

To Count Beugnot, who disliked political women, who was a royalist, and who had never seen Madame Roland until he met her in the Conciergerie, we owe the most finished of these pen portraits: "Madame Roland was from thirty-five to forty years old; her face was not regularly beautiful but very agreeable . . . her figure was gracefully rounded, and her hand was perfectly modelled. Her glance was full of expression, and even in repose her face was noble and engaging. She had no need to speak to be suspected of wit, but no woman spoke with more purity, grace, and elegance. She owed perhaps to the habit of speaking Italian the talent to give to the French tongue a rhythm and a truly novel cadence. She set off the harmony of her voice by gestures full of nobility and truth, and by the expression of her eyes that became animated with her discourse, and I felt each day a new charm in listening to her, less in what she said than in the magic of her speech."

If for a plastic image of this graceful, brilliant woman we consult the prints in the Coste collection at Lyons, that of Vatel at Versailles, those of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Musée Carnavalet, some idea of Madame Roland, colorless, silent, and in repose, may be gained. In them she appears as a piquant, attractive person with a clever, amiable face, somewhat lacking in distinction. What is sadly wanting in them is the spirit and elevation which her many interests and high enthusiasm lent her when she spoke or thought or felt, and which were so perfectly expressed in her mobile face that "you would have said her very body thought"; in a word: transparency. Hers was not the beauty of noble or delicate lines; she would have been plain in a photograph, and in a good engraving is only pleasing.

In the château of Rosière near Bourgoin (Isère), the home of the Rolands' great-granddaughter, Madame Taillet, is a drawing in red chalk, somewhat faded, of Madame Roland. Her descendants consider it the best likeness of their ancestress. According to family tradition, it was drawn in prison and given to the *bonne*, Marguerite Fleury, for Eudora Roland shortly before her mother's death. It is a profile;

indeed, Madame Roland's people believe that she was never drawn or painted except in this way, possibly because she mentioned in her detailed description of herself that her nose "a little thick at the end, appeared less so in profile." A copy of this drawing in black crayon also exists at Rosière, made (1827) by Eliza Bosc, the daughter of the Rolands' devoted friend, and a second copy, by Mademoiselle Mélanie Guérin, is in Paris in the apartment of a granddaughter of Madame Roland, Madame Marillier.

Most of the engravings were made after this portrait, and they all possess a strong family likeness. The proportions of the features differ slightly in Bonneville's, Pasquier's, Nicollet's, and Gaucher's plates. Dien has added a cap to his rather ordinary head, and Mademoiselle Aspasie La Ferrière and Delpech have perhaps sweetened and softened the traits of the original drawing. After it also was modelled the medallion by David d'Angers. The cameo of the Carnavalet suggests Gaucher's engraving, while Couriger's vigorous little medal in the Bibliothèque Nationale shows a more direct inspiration.

The coiffure and costume are the same in all these different renderings. The hair cut short across the forehead and rolled at the sides of the head *à la jockéi*, as Madame Grandchamp called it, hangs loosely in rich curls on the shoulders. The dress is the tight-fitting, double-breasted coat of 1792 with its two rows of buttons and buckled belt (seen more plainly in Bonneville's plate than in the others). The crossed neckerchief is worn close and high, and a collarette of ribbon is knotted under the chin.

In a weakly painted miniature in my own possession that closely resembles Mademoiselle Aspasie La Ferrière's drawing, the hair is powdered, and the dress and ribbon necklet are red. The lines of the profile have been retouched in black and the roses have faded from the face, as in so many old miniatures that have been exposed to the light. Color was Madame Roland's strong point, and the brush should have treated her more tenderly than the burin, but her friend Champagneux says in his preface to an edition of her Memoirs (that of 1800) that four artists had failed in painting her. A silhouette of her with her husband and child, by

Lavater, at Rosière, and her portrait by the physionotrace have never been reproduced, but they probably would prove equally unsatisfactory.*

From M. Perroud I learn that M. Nouvion, a magistrate of Nîmes, possesses a portrait of Madame Roland by Prudhon, painted in 1792, which Madame Taillet considers authentic, and that another portrait is owned by M. le comte Duchâtel, ex-ambassador to Vienna. In the Paris exhibition of Portraits of Women some years ago, there was a canvas said to represent Madame Roland seated on a sofa with a little dog at her side.

I have not seen these three pictures, or any reproductions of them. Among the portraits called Madame Roland, with no justification for the title, is a painting of a pretty woman with blue eyes and chestnut hair in the Musée Carnavalet, which is manifestly apocryphal, and a portrait by Heinsius at Versailles. The latter represents an affected person, with a vulgar simper and a bold expression, exceedingly *décolletée*. The attribution is unsupported by documentary evidence, and seems an affront to the memory of the modest and dignified *citoyenne*. Madame Roland's family and Madame Fougère, widow of M. Fougère, who collected and edited many of the *papiers Roland*, protested against this unwarranted ascription, but it has not been corrected either in the official guides or on the picture. M. de Nolhac has, however, promised that in the next edition of the catalogue a sceptical interrogation-point shall follow the name. This portrait has been so often reproduced by photography, on postal cards and in works on Madame Roland, notably Dauban's, that I may be pardoned for insisting on its probable spuriousness.

As to the terra-cotta bust of Morin, executed in 1790, now in the collection of M. Taigny, reproduced in Armand Dayot's Révolution Française, it does not bear the slightest resemblance to Madame Roland's authentic portraits, and if intended for her the sculptor was curiously unfaithful to his model.

Of Mademoiselle Phlipon only one, a childishly ill-drawn engraving, has come to light. It is now in the collection of

*The physionotrace portrait has been reproduced; doubtless since the above was written.—Ed.

prints in the Musée Carnavalet, and was published by M. Join-Lambert in his Mariage de Madame Roland. This may be the portrait, drawn by her father, which Manon gave to Sophie Cannet (August 20, 1774), and which Roland saw in Amiens before he met the original. The rough little engraving may suggest Manon as a jolly peasant lass trotting to Etampes on her donkey, but is too feebly treated to be a satisfactory portrait.

A charming little head in the Musée Carnavalet, labelled "Madame Roland when a child," is of a later period in style than that of Manon's girlhood. It may possibly represent Eudora Roland, her daughter.

Though the wife of the minister of the interior was often engraved, painted, and modelled in 1792, there are no portraits of the comparatively obscure Madame de la Platière from 1780–90. Some years ago M. Gonsse discovered a bust of a nameless lady, by an unknown sculptor, in the attic of the ducal palace at Nevers, which he named Madame Roland, and ascribed to the Lyonnese sculptor Chinard, a friend of the Rolands. It is a thinner, sharper, more uneasily alert person than the familiar engravings of the Revolution show. The face is worn, almost haggard, and the expression is unquiet, the mouth ironical. If it is indeed a portrait of Madame Roland it differs curiously from the one modelled later by Chinard, now in the collection of M. Aynard in Lyons.

The Fougère legacy of 1899 to the National Library of Paris included a brilliant drawing by Danloux of Madame Roland. It is a rather *bravura* portrait, but is as distinguished as it is spirited. The hair is curled, frosted with powder, and piled high on the head, in the fashion of the early nineties. The chin is lifted, neckerchief and revers are a-flutter, and in the superb carriage of head and shoulders there is something of the arrogant *bel air* of the fine lady.

There is no touch of haughtiness, characteristic or conventional, in M. Aynard's beautiful terra-cotta term modelled after Chinard's return from Rome. The sculptor Chinard was one of the two French artists, pensioners of the Villa Medici, who were imprisoned by the Pope for their republican opinions. It was to liberate them that Madame Roland wrote the well-known letter to the "Prince Bishop of Rome."

Perhaps the remembrance of this signal service was in the sculptor's mind, ennobling his model. Undoubtedly his Roman sojourn had enlarged his rather literal first manner; in any case, Chinard's is the most genial and captivating of Madame Roland's many portraits. It justifies the enthusiasm of her contemporaries, for which scant excuse is offered by the engravings that head the Memoirs.

Chinard's bust represents a woman in the late summer of life. Her classic robe is folded tunicwise over the bosom, her dense hair falls loosely on her shoulders and is cut square across the brow. The special charm of the work is its characterization. The sympathetic face, grave yet tender, generously rather than keenly intelligent, may express the genius of the Gironde, ardent yet magnanimous.

The only portrait of herself, however, that received Madame Roland's approval was "*le camée de Langlois*," which she temperately termed "the least bad of them all." Where is this *camée de Langlois?* Has it survived the wreck of so many stronger things? What is it? Has it come down to us? These questions M. Vatel, the historian of the Gironde, asked himself, and time and effort answered them. To appreciate the knowledge, patience, intelligence, and intuition with which M. Vatel pursued his quest, his own account of it should be read. The problem, worthy of the keenest sleuths of fiction, was: to find a small, fragile object, not remarkable *per se*, of little intrinsic value, the property of a condemned person whose goods were confiscated, which disappeared in a time of revolution when property was no more respected than life. This problem was solved in a manner which would have honored those world-renowned specialists M. Dupin and Sherlock Holmes. No tale of Gaboriau's shows more constructive ingenuity, no Sergeant Cuff of fiction manifests a more remarkable fusion of instinctive *flair* and ratiocination, than this learned and dignified magistrate in his tireless yet discreet pursuit. If the story of Madame Roland's MSS. is a romance of adventure, the discovery of her miniature is an exciting detective story. It would take too long to follow the process; the result of M. Vatel's chase claims our interest.

The Archives of Paris are beautifully housed in the Hôtel de Soubise. Few visitors who come to see the elegantly deco-

rated rooms, the letters of Henry IV, or the signature (cross) of Jeanne d'Arc, notice in case No. 125 a quantity of tattered, blotted MSS. and the miniature of a woman set in a thin rim of gold. It has evidently been taken out of a box-lid or a more elaborate frame, for the slim golden circle is battered and the miniature is cracked. It represents a woman still young, rosy, dark haired and eyed, with the features, the shape of the head, the coiffure, and the coloring of Madame Roland. It also resembles her great-granddaughter, Madame Taillet. A small fichu *en sautoir*, a simple white gown, a broad blue sash, date the costume 1792. The *facture* of the miniature is that of Jérome Langlois, a pupil of Vien, the well-known miniaturist. Langlois had made a specialty of "*portraits en miniatures et en camées*"; this latter term seems to designate some particular technical process. This one is *au fixé*, as it was called in the eighteenth century; it adhered to the glass; which is unfortunate, as the glass is cracked, and the fissure runs through the chin. A painter who examined the miniature for me pronounced it a clever piece of painting, a little forced in effect, and not quite true in lighting, as the side of the face in shadow is not on the same atmospheric plane as the lighted side. It was interesting to discover later that this same peculiarity had been observed by M. Sensier, an expert in the art and history of the Revolution, who in 1872 inspected the miniature at the request of M. Vatel.

The family tradition that Madame Roland was never drawn or painted except in profile is the only objection to the authenticity of this portrait. M. Sensier believed that several copies of it were made by the artist himself, as was the custom before the discovery of the daguerreotype, and cited as referring to this miniature a letter to Serven, the minister of war, friend and comrade of the Rolands. Mentioning the dangers that were closing around her, Madame Roland wrote: "Consequently I am sending you my portrait, for one must leave something of one's self to one's friends. I am glad to tell you that after my husband, my daughter, and *another person*, it is unknown to the world, and the general run of my friends" (December 25, Year 1, [1792]). The date is significant. This letter was written in those dark days after the Rolands had protested against

the September massacres, opposed the violent measures of the Mountain, and were "under the knife of Robespierre and Marat"—no figurative expression. On the following day, the 26th of December, the defense of the King was to be heard, and an outbreak of popular fury was predicted. Desmoulins and Marat's papers had perseveringly calumniated Madame Roland, and Danton's proselytes, the furies of the Halles, had threatened her with Madame de Lamballe's fate; menacing letters were received every day, and she slept with a pistol at her pillow. No wonder she desired to leave some intact image of herself to her friends.

M. Sensier's expert knowledge backed by Vatel's researches, too minute and extended even to enumerate here, are convincing. This then is the portrait sent to that "other person," that lover so long unknown, whose identity puzzled friends and enemies alike, and who was called in turn Serven, Barbaroux, and Bancal, until another discovery of Messieurs Vatel and Sensier named Buzot as Madame Roland's knight.

What strong things this fragile relic of a stern tragedy has outlasted! Did Buzot wear it on his breast in those spring days when the Gironde was at death-grips with the Mountain? Did he carry it as a talisman when he faced the threats and curses of the shrieking tribunes, when he pressed to his perilous place in the Convention through a murderous crowd? Did the sight, the feel of it spur on his crusade against the mob tyranny of Paris? Was it an unseen auditor of his call to arms in the terrorized provinces? When shocked and saddened he left the council of war after Wimpfen, the Gironde's general, had proposed an alliance with the royalists, an acceptance of English overtures, did the image of "the woman who incarnated the Republic" revive the courage of this vanquished republican?

The painted bit of glass journeyed with him in that lamentable "retreat of the eleven" through a craven France shuddering in the shadow of the guillotine. During long, miserable months of hiding in forest and quarry, in freezing caves and stifling garrets, the frail fetich lay on Buzot's breaking heart, and he parted from it only when he left his last refuge, resolved to die a free man.

Locked in a leaden casket with the fugitive's Memoirs

and letters, the miniature was hastily hidden by the Girondin's hostess just before she was carried off to the guillotine. Unearthed by the agents of the Committee of Public Safety, it was despatched first to Bordeaux, then on to Paris, where it was handed over to Robespierre, after some less incorruptible patriot had pried out the jewels from the frame.

Did it say anything to Robespierre, this image of the woman who had not so long before generously offered him a refuge when he was "suspect"? Did he remember a certain 21st of June as he glanced at the portrait? The year was 1791; the King was in flight. Paris was wild with rage and suspicion. Robespierre, white and terror-stricken, sat gnawing his nails at Pétion's, muttering that a Saint Bartholomew of patriots had been planned, and that they had not twenty-four hours to live. Did he recall the radiant sybil who smiled at his fears and predicted the flowering of a republic on the ruins of royalty? Who knows? Even modern research has not yet explored that strange, monstrous mind.

After Thermidor, Courtois, Robespierre's jackal, hid this with other relics. He disinterred them now and then, and tossed a few scraps to those he feared or favored. From hand to hand the portrait and the papers have been passed on to our own generation, and have found a permanent resting-place in the Archives.

There the picture lies to-day, a fragment of sweet color, beside the tattered, faded manuscripts about it, like a flower fallen among débris, the pathetic, frayed records of the ideals and disillusions of honorable and devoted men whose crime was a belief in the honor and disinterestedness of their fellow men. Could a worthier place be found for the portrait of "the soul of the Gironde"?

APPENDIX II

MADAME ROLAND'S STYLE

Force and frankness of thought—even her enemies have never doubted her sincerity—directness of attack, the habitual use of the exact word, sincerity of expression, and a firmness of touch which can thrust and pierce as well as indicate. This is no manicured style. Intensity of emotion might be expected from a woman writing with death at her door, and feeling, long concentrated and dwelt upon, which bursts forth in bitter irony, in passionate apostrophe, and in furious invective. The art of literary expression never had more illustrious interpreters than in her time, and clarity, movement, vivacity, we expect in a writer of her age and country. But impassioned conviction, abundance, and amplitude are rarer gifts, and these qualities are hers. In spite of our prejudices, our doubts, our objections, this vehement, forceful narrative* seizes attention and completely envelops us in its atmosphere. While reading it we are Girondins, be we what we may when we have cast off its compelling charm, for our spirit is held captive in this close net of words.

We cannot expect impartiality in a woman who pleads for husband, lover, and friends, literally under the knife. The enemies of her cause are her personal foes; with each assault upon it she withers and bleeds. Bitter raillery, sustained invective, blighting sarcasm, all the resources of the rhetorician directed by a just indignation, are employed to scathe and overwhelm the men who a few short months ago were guests and house friends, and asked her hospitality, sought her counsels, and in some instances owed their position to her influence or recommendation. In a frank and ardent nature like Madame Roland's the double-dealing of Danton, the hypocrisy of Pache, the cowardice of Fabre, the weakness of Lanthenas are as incomprehensible as they are un-

*The Memoirs.—Ed.

pardonable. She branded these false friends with an inerrant hand. Her perspicacity enabled her to strike at the weak link in each mail-coat. At bay, alone, hopeless, she does not lose her *sangfroid*, and each thrust is calculated, each blow is deftly aimed. Ire serves but to fuse her periods, to incite her to greater swiftness and a more direct attack. The noble serenity with which she met the calumnies that assailed her personally broke down when her friends were touched. The arrest of the twenty-two Girondists affected her so profoundly that the concierge resolved never to tell her any more political news. She fainted for the first time during her five months in prison when she was told of the condemnation of the Girondists. She raged when she learned of the moral cowardice of the deputies of her own party who dared not refuse to march in Marat's funeral procession (July 16). Seldom has such exaltation of feeling, such a tumultuous temperament, been united with such self-command and such cool and deliberate choice of means of expression. When she takes up her pen, anger is subdued to righteous wrath, the revolt of a pure conscience. The soundness of the phrase, of the significant word, of the elegance and appropriateness of the expression, curbs the violence of emotion and translates it into lofty invective.

The declamatory tone which repels us to-day is softened by playfulness and wit. Only enough of the Cornelian emphasis is retained to fashion her thought in that virile form which was personal to her, and which she owed as much to the temper of her mind as to the high culture which that mind had received since her childhood. Madame Roland wrote as she spoke, if we can trust her contemporaries.

APPENDIX III

MADAME ROLAND'S VERACITY

Does this vivacity of imagination deflect her judgment of political events? Does it invalidate her general statements of fact? The ablest historian of the Gironde has answered this crucial question. Vatel's opinion is decisive. As an eminent lawyer he possessed the judicial habit of thought, and was familiar with the nature of evidence. He brought the methods of legal procedure to his historical studies. He visited the scenes of the events he described, and questioned the survivors of the Revolution. He made a valuable collection of revolutionary relics, and his discoveries in the National Archives have been profitable to every recent writer on the eighteenth century. Of Madame Roland's Memoirs, which he often cites, he wrote: "Note the perfect exactness of the details given by Madame Roland. Her assertions have been contested by historians, who wrote on the Revolution in a spirit hostile to her party. I affirm on the contrary that every time I have had occasion to verify the facts advanced by Madame Roland, I have discovered material proofs in support of what she stated. I shall have the opportunity to return to this subject in the course of this publication, and I even propose to write a separate work under the title of The Veracity of Madame Roland."

That party spirit tinged her narrative is as manifest as it was inevitable that it should be; she is answering accusations, defending her husband, and justifying her own conduct. She is testifying to the rectitude of friends and coworkers. Hence we must not expect from her even-handed justice to enemies or impartial views of her executioners. The opinion of a soldier in the forefront of the battle is rarely unbiassed. Even those who write of the Revolution to-day still hear the roar of conflict, and perhaps unconsciously, through temperament or tradition, are partisans of the Mountain or the Gironde or the Throne.

If she was too ready to believe evil of her political adversaries, she shared this weakness with the noblest characters of her time, for never was calumny more rife. There is no doubt that she believed every word that she wrote, and there is also no doubt that the modern writers, who accuse her of untruthfulness, misquote or misread her words. Messrs. Belloc, Bax, Stephens bring grave charges against her trustworthiness, resting their case on strangely confused readings of passages from the Memoirs. As such accusations, if proven, would greatly depreciate the value of these passages, I may be pardoned for considering these said accusations in detail, not only to vindicate the veracity of Madame Roland but to demonstrate how partisan is the attitude of those who now accuse her of wilful misrepresentation.

Mr. Belloc (Robespierre, p. 142) writes: "Madame Roland, who had been present at this meeting [at the Jacobin Club after the massacre of the Champ de Mars], bethought herself of Robespierre, as she sat at home surrounded by the growing terrors of the crisis. She went, or says she went, up into the Rue Saintonge in the Marais to offer him asylum in her house; but she tells us that when she got to his door, somewhat before midnight, he had not yet returned. In this she is truthful, though she is wrong in ascribing terror to a man who was as ignorant of panic as of valor." In a note Mr. Belloc adds: "A little inconsistently, since she also says in her 'Memoirs' that, at the same hour, she was refusing shelter to Robespierre's early friend Madame Robert, on the plea that her house was too well known by Lafayette's faction."

Thus Mr. Belloc, following M. Hamel, who in his older Histoire de Robespierre doubts Madame Roland's statement because she herself writes in another place that on the 17th of July at eleven o'clock at night, when she reached home after the massacre, she found M. and Mme. Robert there. Now M. Hamel would certainly have convicted Madame Roland of falsehood if she had said that she went to Robespierre's house on the night of the 17th of July; *she gives no date*, however, but her narrative shows that it was *not on the 17th*, but some days later, since threats against Robespierre and the report of a plot against him were what induced her to offer

him a hiding-place. She could not have heard all these rumors the very evening of the massacre. What she wrote of Robespierre was this: "Nous nous inquiétâmes véritablement sur son compte, Roland et moi; nous nous fîmes conduire chez lui, au fond du Marais à onze du soir pour lui offrir un asile; mais il avait déjà quitté son domicile." ["We were really anxious about him, Roland and I; we went to his house, in the heart of the Marais at eleven in the evening to offer him a refuge; but he had already left his domicile."] (Memoirs, vol. I, pp. 209–210.) Madame Roland not only did *not* date her journey to Robespierre's house on the 17th, she did *not* refuse "to receive Madame Robert, Robespierre's early friend," at that hour on that date "on the plea that her house was too well known by Lafayette's faction." The Memoirs read: "Le 17 juillet, sortant des Jacobins ou j'avais été témoin des agitations que causèrent les tristes événements du Champ de Mars, je trouvai, en rentrant chez moi, à onze heures du soir, M. et Mme. Robert. 'Nous venons,' me dit la femme avec l'air de confiance d'une ancienne amie, 'vous demander un asile; il ne faut pas vous avoir beaucoup vue pour croire à la franchise de votre caractère et de votre patriotisme: mon mari rédigeait la pétition sur l'autel de la patrie; j'étais à ses côtés; nous échappons à la boucherie, sans oser nous retirer ni chez nous, ni chez des amis connus où l'on pourrait nous venir chercher.' 'Je vous sais bon gré,' lui répliquai-je, 'd'avoir songé à moi dans une aussi triste circonstance, et je m'honore d'accueillir les persécutés; mais vous serez mal cachés ici (j'étais à l'hôtel Britannique, rue Guénégaud); cette maison est fréquentée, et l'hôte est fort partisan de Lafayette.' 'Il n'est question que de cette nuit, demain nous aviserons à notre retraite.' Je fis dire à la maîtresse de l'hôtel qu'une femme de mes parentes arrivant à Paris, dans ce moment de tumulte, avait laissé ses bagages à la diligence et passerait la nuit avec moi; que je la priais de faire dresser deux lits de camp dans mon appartement. Ils furent disposés dans un salon où se tinrent les hommes, et Mme. Robert coucha dans de lit de mon mari auprès du mien dans ma chambre."

["On the 17th of July, after leaving the Jacobin Club, where I had been a witness of the agitation caused by the unfortunate occurrences of the Champ de Mars, I returned

to my house at eleven o'clock at night, and found M. and Mme. Robert there. 'We have come,' said the wife with the confident air of a former friend, 'to ask you for shelter; it is not necessary to have seen you many times to believe in the frankness of your character and your patriotism. My husband was writing the petition on the altar of the Fatherland. I was at his side. We escaped from the butchery without daring to go either to our own house or to those of people who are known to be our friends, and where we may be looked for.' 'I am much pleased,' I replied, 'that you should have thought of me in such trying circumstances, and I honor myself by welcoming the persecuted, but you will be poorly hidden here (I was at the Hôtel Britannique, Rue Guénégaud); the house is much frequented, and the landlord is a strong partisan of Lafayette.' 'It is only for to-night; to-morrow we shall think about our retreat.' I had the landlady told that a woman, one of my relatives, who had just arrived in Paris during the disturbance, had left her baggage in the diligence, and would spend the night with me, and that I begged her to have two camp beds set up in my apartment. They were put into a salon where the men lodged, and Madame Robert slept in my husband's bed beside mine in my room."] (Memoirs, vol. I, pp. 170, 171.)

The Roberts not only spent the night with the Rolands, they breakfasted and dined with them the following day. So much for Madame Roland's refusal to shelter Robespierre's friend.

In Danton, Mr. Belloc, following Michelet, holds Madame Roland responsible for the Gironde's rejection of Danton's overtures. Michelet's inference is drawn *only* from a passage in the Memoirs. As a noteworthy instance of how documents can be misinterpreted, and of the peril of using authorities at second hand without consulting the originals, I cite the text and the subsequent variations on its simple theme.

Dumouriez after the victory of Valmy returned to Paris. He dined with the Rolands, and after dinner proposed going to the opera. It was the custom then, as indeed it is now, for successful generals to receive ovations in the theatres after a campaign; to accompany Dumouriez would have been to

court conspicuousness and, at a moment when the Gironde was in power, to share a portion of his honors; therefore Madame Roland prudently avoided appearing in his company. She writes:

"Il [Dumouriez] se proposait d'aller après dîner à l'Opéra; c'était encore un reste de l'ancienne folie des généraux d'aller se montrer au spectacle et chercher des couronnes de théâtre, lorsqu'ils avaient remporté quelque avantage.

"Une personne me demanda si je ne comptais point y aller; j'évitai de répondre, parce qu'il ne convenait ni à mon caractère ni à mes mœurs d'y paraître avec Dumouriez. Mais après que la compagnie fut partie, je proposai à Vergniaud de m'y accompagner dans ma loge avec ma fille. Nous nous y rendîmes. L'ouvreuse de loges, etonnée, me dit que la loge du ministre était occupée. 'Cela n'est pas possible,' lui dis-je. On n'y entrait que sur des billets signés de lui, et je n'en avais donné à personne. 'Mais c'est le ministre qui a voulu entrer.'—'Non, ce n'est pas lui; ouvrez-moi, je verrai qui c'est.' Trois ou quatre sans-culottes, en forme de spadassins, étaient à la porte. 'On n'ouvre pas,' s'écrièrent-ils, 'le ministre est là.'—'Je ne puis me dispenser d'ouvrir,' répond la femme qui dans l'instant ouvre effectivement la porte. J'aperçois la grosse figure de Danton, celle de Fabre et trois ou quatre femmes de mauvaise tournure. Le spectacle était commencé; ils fixaient le théâtre; Danton s'inclinait sur la loge voisine pour causer avec Dumouriez que je reconnus, le tout d'un clin d'œil, sans que personne de la loge m'eût vue. Je me retirai subitement, en poussant la porte. 'Véritablement,' dis-je a l'ouvreuse, 'c'est un ci-devant ministre de la justice, à qui j'aime mieux laisser le fruit d'une impertinence que de me compromettre avec lui; je n'ai que faire ici.' Et je me retirai, jugeant au reste que la sottise de Danton me sauvait de l'inconvénient, que j'avais voulu éviter, de paraître avec Dumouriez, puisqu'il se serait trouvé si près de moi."]

["Some one asked me if I did not intend to go. I avoided answering because it hardly suited my character or my conduct (*mœurs*) to appear there with Dumouriez. But after the company had gone I asked Vergniaud to go with me to my box, with my daughter. We went. The box-opener, in some surprise, told me the minister's box was

occupied. 'That is not possible,' I said to her. No one entered it without a note signed by him, and I had not given one to anybody. 'But it was the minister who wished to go in.' 'No, it was not he; open the door. I will see who it is.' Three or four sansculottes of cut-throat aspect were at the door. 'Don't open,' they said, 'the minister is there.' 'I can't help opening,' said the woman, who in a moment actually opened the door. I saw Danton's broad visage, that of Fabre, and *three or four* disreputable-looking women. The performance had begun; they were looking at the stage. Danton leaned towards the adjoining box to talk with Dumouriez, whom I recognized; all this at a glance without any one in the box having seen me. I went out quickly, pushing the door to. 'Truly,' I said to the box-opener, 'it is a former minister of justice to whom I would rather leave the advantage of his impertinence than compromise myself with him; I have nothing to do here,' and I retired, thinking, however, that the impertinence of Danton had spared me the impropriety, which I wished to avoid, of appearing with Dumouriez, since he would have been so near me."] (Memoirs, vol. I, pp. 251–2.)

Nothing could be more simply and clearly told than this incident, and yet Michelet whimsically interpreted it thus: "Danton connaissait très bien le caractère difficile des Girondins, leur amour-propre inquiet, la sévérité chagrine de Roland, la susceptibilité de Madame Roland, le vertueux et délicat orgueil qu'elle plaçait sur son mari, ne pardonnant pas à Danton le mot brutal qu'il avait dit pour rendre Roland ridicule. Danton, dans sa bonhommie audacieuse, voulut, sans négociation ni explication, briser tout d'abord la glace. Menant Dumouriez au théâtre, il entra non dans la même loge, mais dans celle d'à côté, d'où il parlait au général. Cette loge était celle même du ministre de l'intérieur, de Roland. Danton, comme ancien collégue, s'y établit familièrement avec deux femmes, très probablement sa mère et sa femme (qu'il aimait de passion). Si nous ne nous trompons dans cette conjecture, une telle démarche, faite en famille, était un gage de paix. On savait que personne n'avait été plus cruellement atteint que Madame Danton par les fatales journées de Septembre; elle devint malade et mourut bientot.

"Il y avait à parier que les dames se rapprocheraient; Madame Roland, si elle fut entrée dans la loge, se fut liée malgré elle, et elle eût été touchée. Au reste, que les Roland prissent bien ou mal la chose, elle pouvait avoir politiquement d'admirables résultats. Tous les journaux allaient dire qu'on avait vu, réunies dans une loge de six pieds carrés, la Montagne et la Gironde, qu'il n'y avait plus de partis, que toute discorde expirait. Cette seule apparence d'union aurait mieux servi la France que le gain d'une bataille.

"Madame Roland vint, en effet, et elle fut indisposée tout d'abord; on la retint à la porte, lui disant que la loge était occupée; elle se la fit ouvrir, et vit Danton à la place qu'elle eût prise, près du héros de la fête. Elle aimait peu Dumouriez, mais elle ne voulait pas moins, tout porte à le croire, le favoriser ce soir-là de son gracieux voisinage, le couronner de cette marque solennelle d'une sympathie austère; elle seule se croyait digne de le remercier ainsi tacitement au nom de la France.

"Elle avait pris pour venir le bras de Vergniaud, voulant siéger entre le grand orateur et le général, apparaissant comme alliance du génie et de la victoire, et prenant hardiment sa part dans celle-ci pour le parti girondin. Danton dérangea tout cela. Madame Roland ne se soucia pas de l'avoir près d'elle, entre elle et Dumouriez. En quoi elle fut injuste. . . . Quoi qu'il en soit, Madame Roland prit pour prétexte les femmes. Elle vit, dit-elle, 'deux femmes de mauvaise tournure.' Et sans examiner si, malgré cette tournure, elles n'étaient point respectables, elle referma la loge, sans entrer, et se retira." ["Danton understood perfectly the exacting temper of the Girondins, their uneasy self-love, the fretful severity of Roland, the susceptibility of Madame Roland, the estimable and delicate pride she felt for her husband, which could not forgive Danton the brutal speech he had made to render Roland ridiculous. *Danton, with his audacious good humor, desired, without negotiation or explanation, to break the ice at once. Taking Dumouriez to the theatre,* he went into, not the same box, but the one beside it, from which he talked with the general. This box was that of the minister of the interior, of Roland. Danton, as an old colleague, established himself in it familiarly with *two women, very probably his mother and wife, whom he passionately loved. If we are not*

deceived in this conjecture such a step, taken *en famille*, was a pledge of peace. It was known that no one had been more cruelly affected than Madame Danton by the fatal days of September; she became ill, and died soon afterwards. One might have wagered that the ladies would have become acquainted; Madame Roland, if she had entered the box, would have felt bound in spite of herself, and would have been touched. Besides, whether the Rolands took the thing well or ill, it might have admirable results. All the papers would say that they had seen the Mountain and the Gironde reunited in a box six feet square, that there were no more parties, and all discord had vanished. The mere semblance of union would have served France better than a battle won.

"Madame Roland did come, and was averse from the first. They kept her at the door, saying the box was occupied; she had it opened and saw Danton *in the place she* would have taken, near the hero of the fête. She had little love for Dumouriez, *but everything disposes one to believe* that in spite of that she wished to favor him that evening with a gracious neighborliness, and crown him with this formal token of an austere sympathy. She alone believed herself worthy thus to thank him tacitly in the name of France.

"She had taken the arm of Vergniaud to come, *desiring to sit between the great orator and the general*, appearing as the alliance of genius and victory, *boldly taking her share in it for the Girondin party*. Danton upset all that. Madame Roland did not care to have him near her, between her and Dumouriez. In which she was unjust. . . . However that may be, Madame Roland made the women a pretext. She saw, she said, '*two disreputable-looking women*,' and without examining whether in spite of their appearance they were not respectable, she shut the box without entering it and retired."]

Michelet's view of Madame Roland's motives in this contingency is decidedly deflected, but Mr. Belloc's version is still more awry: "Michelet gives us two pictures. . . . In the first Dumouriez and Danton sat *in the same box at the theatre*, and Vergniaud was coming in with the soul of the Girondins. The door opened and promised this spectacle: Danton and the general and the orator of the pure Republi-

cans, and the woman most identified with the Right. It would have been such a picture for all the people there as Danton would have prayed or paid for. *The door was ajar,* and as she came near, Madame Roland saw Danton sitting in the box; *she put out her hand from Vergniaud's arm and shut the door.* There is in her Memoirs a kind of apology *'des femmes de mauvaise tournure'*—utter nonsense; it was Roland's box, *and his wife was expected.* Danton and Dumouriez were not of the gutter. No, it was the narrow, feminine hatred, so closely allied to her intense devotion, that made Madame Roland thrust Danton at arm's length." (Danton, pp. 195–6.)

The story told by Madame Roland as an example of how Danton and Fabre attached themselves to Dumouriez after Valmy, and tried to share the general's popularity, has grown into an incident of tragic significance. The Gironde, personified by Madame Roland, rejects an alliance with the Mountain! The hand that closed an opera-box door dealt a death-blow to the Girondins! Seen through the mists of "psychical" interpretation Madame Roland looks like a kind of Thais firing another Troy. An utterly commonplace event thus distorted by excess of imagination looms gigantic. Michelet's already heightened picture rises in key under Mr. Belloc's touch. Dumouriez and Danton are now sitting in the same box. This is a curious misstatement of Danton's biographer, for in his defense before the Revolutionary Tribunal Danton protested that he had sat in the theatre-box *next* to that of Dumouriez, not in one *with* the treacherous soldier. Mr. Belloc's memory is at least impartially unreliable. Dumouriez and Danton then are *expecting Madame Roland with Vergniaud;* they have therefore left *the door ajar.* As for the "three or four disreputable-looking women" of the Memoirs—a stroke of Mr. Belloc's pen and they vanish into nothingness. Under Michelet's magic they had merely shrunk to two, but by being transformed into an adored wife and an aged mother, they had gained in quality what they lost in quantity. Mr. Belloc, however, will have none of them, and by his suppression of them renders Madame Roland's conduct inexplicable. True, he substitutes his own arbitrary interpretation—a sudden fit of "narrow feminine hatred"; her own explanation is "utter

nonsense." "Danton and Dumouriez were not of the gutter." Danton's *language* was much of the time, and it was from his own remarks that his contemporaries formed their poor opinion of his *mœurs*, while Dumouriez was a notoriously loose liver. That Madame Roland, unaccompanied by her husband, should hesitate to appear in public with such men and their doubtful-looking companions, and should quietly retire before they had seen her, seems to the unbiassed the easiest way of avoiding an awkward situation. To impute to this unobserved exit the failure of the Mountain and the Gironde to unite is to write history as a seer, not as an investigator. Michelet, who loved not Madame Roland less but Danton more, persuaded himself that this rather impudent invasion of the opera-box was intended as an overture of peace. A curious olive-branch surely, calculated to propitiate a proud and polished woman whom he had publicly attacked in the Convention some two weeks before! Far from being conciliatory, his usurpation of her place was an impertinence which Madame Roland showed political wisdom in ignoring. Instead of being a display of temper, as Mr. Belloc would have us believe, her conduct was an exhibition of tact and self-control. The affair was just what she represents it: Danton desired to share the laurels of Valmy with Dumouriez, the Gironde's general; he therefore followed him about from one public place to another. The Rolands' box was next to that occupied by Dumouriez, and Danton appropriated it, regardless of the rights and susceptibilities of its proprietors. Even Danton could not have fancied that he would be *persona grata* to those he had so recently affronted. The anecdote is a curious instance of what party spirit can read between the lines of a document.

Not only is Mr. Belloc's personal interpretation of text puzzling to an inquiring reader, but believing, no doubt, that consistency is the vice of little minds, he further bewilders us by his frequent and unexplained changes of opinion, and by his optimistic reliance on a memory that may not be marble to receive but certainly proves wax to retain. While pronouncing Madame Roland "truthful and enthusiastic" in an appendix (Danton, p. 343), he accuses her of malicious falsehood in a note (*ibid.*, pp. 185–6). It is generally in notes that Madame Roland receives correction from Mr. Belloc.

He is sometimes lenient to her in his text, but his second thoughts, as represented by his annotations, are marked by an increase of severity. In large type he is almost a Girondin, in small type nearly a Terrorist.

Mr. Belloc also possesses a mysterious touchstone to determine the historic value of certain statements in the Memoirs and the worthlessness of others. To the student this occult process and the conclusions derived from it are equally mystifying. Take, for instance, two pages of the Memoirs relating to Danton's conduct during the carnage of September. Why should we accept one and doubt the other with Mr. Belloc? What evidence, external or internal, is there that one is veracious and the other a fabrication? "Je me souviens [writes Mme. Roland of these butcheries], à propos de ceux-ci, d'un fait assez précieux. Grandpré, nommé par le ministre de l'Intérieur pour visiter les prisons, avait trouvé leurs tristes habitants dans le plus grand effroi dans la matinée du 2 septembre; il avait fait beaucoup de démarches pour faciliter la sortie de plusieurs de ceux-ci et il avait réussi pour un assez bon nombre; mais les bruits qui s'étaient répandus tenaient ceux qui restaient dans la plus grande perplexité. G. P. (Grandpré) de retour à l'hôtel, attend les ministres à la sortie du Conseil; Danton parait le premier, il l'approche, lui parle de ce qu'il a vu, retrace les démarches, les réquisitions faites à la force armée par le ministre de l'Intérieur, le peu d'égards qu'on semble y avoir, les alarmes des détenus et les soins que lui, ministre de la Justice, devait prendre pour eux. Danton, importuné de la représentation malencontreuse, s'écrie, avec sa voix beuglante et un geste approprié à l'expression: 'Je me f— bien des prisonniers! Qu'ils deviennent ce qu'ils pourront!' Et il passe son chemin avec humeur. C'était dans le second antichambre, en présence de vingt personnes qui frémirent d'entendre un si rude ministre de la Justice." ["I remember a rather noteworthy incident. Grandpré, named by the Minister of the Interior to visit the prisons, had found their miserable inmates in the greatest alarm on the morning of the 2d of September. He had already taken many steps to facilitate the release of many of them, and he had succeeded in many instances, but reports were spreading that threw those who remained into the greatest perplexity. Grandpré,

on his return to the hotel (the ministry), waited for the ministers to leave the council; Danton was the first who appeared; he (Grandpré) went to him, told him what he had seen, described the steps he had himself taken, the appeals for an armed force made by the Minister of the Interior, the slight attention that had been paid to them, the alarm of the prisoners, and the care that he (Danton), Minister of Justice, owed them. Danton, importuned by this ill-timed suggestion, cried in his bellowing tone, and with a gesture appropriate to the expression: 'Damn the prisoners! Let what may befall them.' And he went on his way in a temper. This was in the second antechamber, in the presence of twenty people, who shuddered to hear so brutal a Minister of Justice."] (Memoirs, vol. I, pp. 216–217.)

This anecdote Mr. Belloc admits may be authentic, but the following story, according to him, is an instance, the unique one he cites by the way, of "historical intuition." On the 2d of September, at five o'clock, while the prisons were being surrounded, two hundred men arrived at Roland's house and clamored for the minister and for firearms. Madame Roland succeeded in sending them away quietly by assuring them there were no arms in the house, and that they would find Roland at the Hôtel de la Marine. "Que faisait alors Danton? Je ne l'ai su que plusieurs jours après, mais c'est bon à dire ici pour rapprocher les faits. Il était à la Mairie, dans le comité dit de surveillance d'où sortait l'ordre des arrestations si multipliées depuis quelques jours: il venait d'y embrasser Marat, après la parade d'une feinte brouillerie de vingt-quatre heures. Il monte chez Pétion, le prend en particulier, lui dit dans son langage toujours relevé d'expressions energiques: 'Savez-vous de quoi ils se sont avisés? Est-ce qu'ils n'ont pas lancé un mandat d'arrêt contre Roland?'—'Qui cela?' demande Pétion.—'Eh! cet enragé comité. J'ai pris le mandat; tenez, le voilà; nous ne pouvons laisser agir ainsi. Diable! contre un membre du Conseil!' Pétion prend le mandat, le lit, le lui rend en souriant, et dit: 'Laissez faire, ce sera d'un bon effet.' 'D'un bon effet!' réplique Danton, qui examinait curieusement le maire; 'oh! je ne souffrirai pas cela, je vais les mettre à la raison' et le mandat ne fut pas mis à exécution. Mais qui est-ce qui ne se dit pas que les

deux cents hommes devaient avoir été envoyés chez le ministre de l'Intérieur par les auteurs du mandat? Qui est-ce qui ne soupçonne point que l'inutilité de leur tentative, apportant du retard à l'exécution du projet, put faire balancer ceux qui l'avaient conçu? Qui est-ce qui ne voit pas dans la démarche de Danton auprès du maire celle d'un conjuré qui veut pressentir l'effet du coup, ou se faire honneur de l'avoir paré lorsqu'il se trouve manqué d'ailleurs ou rendu douteux par d'involontaires délais?" ["What was Danton doing in the meantime? He was at the Mairie (then in the Cité, cour du Palais), at the Committee of Surveillance whence came those orders for arrests so numerous during the last few days. He had just fallen on the neck of Marat after a sham quarrel of twenty-four hours. He went upstairs to Pétion's rooms, took him aside, and said to him in his peculiar language, always heightened by energetic expressions: 'Do you know what they have decided to do? If they haven't launched an order for arresting Roland!' 'Who did that?' asks Pétion. 'Why, that mad committee. I took the order; here it is; we can't let them act thus. The devil! And against a member of the Council too!' Pétion took the order, read it, returned it to him smiling, and said: 'Let it go, it will have a good effect.' 'A good effect,' replied Danton, who was looking curiously at the Mayor (Pétion). 'Oh, I shall not allow it. I shall bring them to reason,' and the order was not executed. But who would not say to himself that the two hundred men must have been sent to the Minister of the Interior by the authors of the order? Who would not suspect that the failure of their attempt, in retarding the execution of the project, had made those who conceived it hesitate? Who would not see in Danton's conduct with the Mayor that of a confederate who tries to foresee the effect of a blow, or to claim the honor of parrying it when it has failed or seems unsuccessful through involuntary delay?"] (Memoirs, vol. I, p. 104.)

Mr. Belloc apparently had these citations in mind when, referring to Danton's violent hatred and disgust for the Royalists, he says: "There is something of that deplorable temper in the anecdote which Madame Roland gives of him, striding through the rooms *on the second day*, and saying 'that the prisoners could save themselves.' But this anec-

dote is not history; it is an accusation, and one made by an enemy." To this passage Mr. Belloc affixes the following note:

"Madame Roland had the great gift of historical intuition, that is, she could minutely describe events that never took place. *I attach no kind of importance to the passage immediately preceding.* If Danton and Pétion were alone, as she describes them, her picture is the picture of a novelist. The phrase quoted above may be authentic; there were witnesses."

It is unfortunate for his readers that Danton's panegyrist has profited so little by a study of his hero's clear and vigorous style. Mr. Belloc's utterances are often obscure, occasionally cryptic. Does he in the paragraph just cited mean that the story of Danton's reply to Grandpré's plea may be true, but that the account of the interview between Danton and Pétion is an invention? The context seems to imply this, but how incomprehensible to any one unfamiliar with the Memoirs are these veiled and mysterious allusions to them. Mr. Belloc never quotes Madame Roland's own words; he does not cite the original Memoirs, though he sometimes borrows from them a clean-cut phrase or two to clarify his own descriptions. Does he mean the Danton-Pétion dialogue when he writes that he "attaches no importance to the passage immediately preceding"? Preceding what? In Madame Roland's pages the conversation between Danton and Pétion does not precede the anecdote of Danton and Grandpré; on the contrary, it follows the Grandpré episode. Madame Roland wrote both these scenes twice (fearing some of her manuscript had been destroyed), and twice in the same order which Mr. Belloc has inverted, to the bewilderment of his readers. Does he offer any proof of his conviction that "if Danton and Pétion were alone, her picture is the picture of a novelist"? There were witnesses to Grandpré's repulse; "therefore it may be true." But both Pétion and Danton were living when Madame Roland was writing, and the former was an intimate friend of the Rolands; she adds that she did not know of the projected arrest until some days later, probably when Pétion had time to tell her of it. Why is it calumnious to write that Danton desired Roland's arrest on the 2d of September when all the world knows that

he attacked Roland and his wife in the Convention on the 25th of the same month?

M. Perroud, the latest and most learned editor of the Roland Memoirs, has also written a note on this interview. It reads as follows: "*Le Mandat d'arrêt lancé contre Roland, ministre de l'Intérieur, par la Commune de Paris et déchiré par Danton, est attesté par tous les témoignages du temps.*" (Mémoires de Madame Roland, vol. I, p. 32.)

Madame Roland has been arraigned by the apologist of Marat as well as by the historian of Danton. Mr. E. Belfort Bax, the Socialist writer, in his preface to Marat, the People's Friend, rejoices that the malignant fabrications of Barbaroux and Madame Roland have been sufficiently exposed, "though their clumsiness and absurdity are such as to render this almost superfluous." Mr. Bax, whose command of invective is extensive, and probably increased by study of the style of l'Ami du Peuple, gives no examples of these exposures, and but one of what he terms "the malicious lies" of Madame Roland. "The representation of Marat as a hideous ogre, conducting ladies by the hand into costly furnished apartments, with blue-and-white damask sofas, elegant draperies, superb porcelain vases, is too absurdly in contradiction with well-known facts to have been worth the making. . . . Madame Roland, be it observed, took care to wait till long after Marat's death before putting forward the slanders, professing to deal with events which, had they really happened, she must have known months before, and which had she known, she would assuredly have been the first to publish at a time when the battle between 'Mountain' and 'Gironde' was at its height." (Marat, pp. 190–1.)

This calumny, too absurd for refutation, according to Marat's apologist, is found in the Memoirs (vol. I, pp. 320–1). "Ici j'entends citer Marat, chez qui les papiers publics annoncent qu'on a trouvé à sa mort un seul assignat de 25 sols: quelle édifiante pauvreté! Voyons donc son logement; c'est Madame Montané qui va le décrire. Son mari, président du tribunal révolutionnaire, est détenu à la Force, pour n'avoir pas prononcé la confiscation des biens des victimes d'Orléans. Elle a été mise à Sainte-Pélagie par mesure de sureté, est-il dit, mais probablement parce qu'on aura craint

les sollicitations actives de cette petite femme du Midi. Née à Toulouse, elle a toute la vivacité du climat ardent sous lequel elle a vu le jour; cousine germaine de Bonnecarrère et tendrement attachée à ce parent d'aimable figure, elle fut désolée de son arrestation, faite il y a quelques mois. Elle s'était donné beaucoup de peines inutiles, et ne savait plus à qui s'adresser lorsqu'elle imagine d'aller trouver Marat. Elle se fait annoncer chez lui: on dit qu'il n'y est pas; mais il entend la voix d'une femme et se présente lui-même: il avait aux jambes des bottes sans bas, portait une vieille culotte de peau, une veste de taffetas blanc; sa chemise crasseuse et ouverte laissait voir une poitrine jaunissante; des ongles longs et sales se dessinaient au bout de ses doigts, et son affreuse figure accompagnait parfaitement ce costume bizarre. Il prend la main de la dame, la conduit dans un salon très frais, meublé en damas bleu et blanc, décoré de rideaux de soie élégamment relevés en draperies, d'un lustre brillant et de superbes vases de porcelaine remplis de fleurs naturelles, alors rares et de haut prix; il s'assied à côte d'elle sur une ottomane voluptueuse, écoute le récit qu'elle veut lui faire, s'intéresse à elle, lui baise la main, serre un peu ses genoux, et lui promet la liberté de son cousin. . . . Le soir même Marat fût au comité, et Bonnecarrère sortit de l'Abbaye le lendemain; mais dans les vingt-quatre heures l'Ami du peuple écrivit au président Montané, en lui envoyant un sujet auquel il s'agissait de rendre un service qu'il fallut bien ne pas refuser."

["Here I propose to cite Marat: the newspapers say that only one *assignat* of twenty-five *sols* was found in his house after his death. What edifying poverty! Let us see his lodgings then; Madame Montané will describe them. Her husband, president of the Revolutionary Tribunal, is confined at La Force for not having decreed the confiscation of the property of the victims of Orleans. Born in Toulouse, she has all the vivacity of her warm native climate; she is a cousin of Bonnecarrère [a factotum of Dumouriez, imprisoned after the general's defection] and tenderly attached to this handsome relative; she was in despair over his arrest several months ago. She took much useless trouble and did not know to whom to apply, when she thought of going to Marat. She gives her name at his house; she is told he is not in;

he hears a woman's voice, and appears; he had boots on, but no stockings, old buckskin breeches, and a white taffeta waistcoat; his soiled shirt was open, showing his yellowish breast; his finger-ends showed long and dirty nails; his frightful face perfectly suited this bizarre costume. He took the lady by the hand, led her into a very dainty *salon*, furnished in blue-and-white damask, decorated with silk hangings elegantly draped, with a brilliant chandelier, and superb china vases filled with natural flowers, then rare and costly [this was during the first week in April, 1793]. He sat down beside her on a luxurious sofa, listened to her story, became interested in her, kissed her hand, clasped her knee, and promised her the cousin's freedom. . . . That same evening Marat was at the comité [*de sûreté générale*], and Bonnecarrère left the Abbaye prison the next morning; but within twenty-four hours the Friend of the People wrote to President Montané, sending him a person in need of a service which there was no way of refusing."]

There have been worse tales told of Marat than that he spared a man who was "suspect" at the prayer of a pretty woman, and the sanguinary "Friend of the People" generally appears in a less attractive *milieu* than a dainty blue-and-white drawing-room. But Marat surprised *in flagrante delicto* of mercy rouses less indignation in his biographer than the picture of Marat the ascetic sitting on a damask couch, Marat the austere kissing a woman's hand or smelling a rose. A Marat *galant* and elegant! Truly a grotesque misrepresentation.

Is it possible that Mr. Bax has not read the list of Marat's possessions made by the officers of the law when the seals were placed on them? Does not this *procès verbal* (*Greffe de la justice de paix du VIe. arrondissement*) confirm Madame Montané's description? Has not Mr. Bax forgotten the pictures of Hauer, of Garnerey, and of Pffeifer, all of them so many more proofs not only that Marat possessed a neat little *salon* but that Madame Roland's accuracy is more impeccable than that of her censor? Would not a comparison of dates have shown Mr. Bax that one of several obvious reasons why Madame Roland did not "put forward these slanders" during the battle between the Gironde and the Mountain was that she did not hear them until after Marat's

death (July 13th), and when the struggle had ended in the defeat of her party and her own imprisonment? It was after the 30th of July, 1793, that Madame Montané became an inmate of Sainte-Pélagie, where Madame Roland was confined. President Montané had been deprived of his office on that date, and sent to La Force for having lacked "energy" in two trials. Mr. Bax surely remembers the first one—that of Charlotte Corday on the 17th of July—in which Montané showed a culpable consideration for the accused. It was, therefore, two weeks at least after Marat's death that Montané's wife told her story to Madame Roland.

Mr. Morse Stephens is apparently possessed of a secret fund of information regarding Madame Roland. He tells us that "from her very childhood she declares that she had been possessed by a longing for social equality, and had been disgusted when but a mere child that the ladies of the court should be able to dress so well." (The French Revolution, vol. II, pp. 15–16.) This extraordinary statement of Mr. Stephens's is unsupported by any known authority. Dauban's edition of the Memoirs, his admirable Etude and the Lettres aux Demoiselles Cannet, the only works cited by Mr. Stephens, do not contain a sentence that the most prejudiced could distort into such an absurdity. Perhaps this curious paragraph is intended for pleasantry; it cannot be taken seriously. Dress seems to stimulate Mr. Stephens's peculiar humor, for he further remarks in seeming facetiousness that the government ministered to Marie Antoinette's passion for it while she was confined in the Temple! Madame Roland is constantly made the subject either of his strange playfulness or of his violent prejudice against her opinions and her party. His references to her are almost invariably accompanied by reckless misstatements, which it would appear almost puerile to confute did they not form part of a history which possesses a certain value for the English student of the Revolution. It seems idle to refute such baseless assertions as that the preparations for the rising of the 10th of August were "openly discussed in Madame Roland's salon," or that Buzot deserted his wife for her, or that she was disgusted with the Queen "because she had not yet departed out of the way to make room for

the social equality which would leave Madame Roland as the leader of society." Mr. Stephens's aversion for the Girondin lady so impairs his accuracy that he is unable to write even her name correctly. From unknown authorities Mr. Stephens learned that Madame Roland "hated the Queen with a personal hatred, and treated her with a want of respect and brutality of language which she must have repented bitterly when she needed pity herself." Where and when? Madame Roland never met Marie Antoinette; she never mentions having seen her. There is nothing personal in her attitude towards the Queen. The republican suspected the sovereign's sincerity, and wisely; the patriot feared the Austrian woman's treachery to France, wisely again; and the wife of a minister who believed the King disposed to favor reforms and adopt the Constitution dreaded the influence of Marie Antoinette, who was arrogant and meddlesome, frivolous and arbitrary. Nothing that Madame Roland wrote of the Queen is as severe as the judgments of her own mother and brother, of Maria Theresia and Joseph II. A phrase in Madame Roland's last letter to Robespierre is *supposed* to refer to Marie Antoinette: "*la femme orgueilleuse ou légère qui maudit l'égalité*"; the letter, however, was never sent. Of course, after the publication of the Arneth letters, the perjuries of the King and Queen, their treachery to their people, and their willingness to dismember France, suspected after the opening of "the *armoire de fer*," have become historic certainties, and modern historians cannot show the Queen the indulgence of those who wrote before 1860.

Mr. Stephens may be as inexact when he studies Madame Roland as when for a contrast to her enthusiasm and ambition he describes Lucille Desmoulins as "a gentle woman with a horror of riots and bloodshed." Coquettish, winning, feather-headed Lucille, if we may trust her biographer, M. Claretie, was as violent as her husband of the sinister name—"*le procureur de la lanterne*." Possibly Mr. Stephens has confused the opinions of the two ladies. It was the "womanly" Madame Desmoulins who proposed burning Marie Antoinette alive on a funeral pyre (Camille Desmoulins, p. 254), and who laughed over Camille's calumnies with the Jacobins *enragés*, her husband's friends.

APPENDIX IV

CHARACTER OF THE ASSEMBLY

In her visits to the Assembly Manon saw nothing to reverse the judgments formed in the solitude of Le Clos. If she had visited the scenes of her girlhood and noted with some complacency that neither wider ambitions nor household cares had dried up the wells of her heart, it was in a critical mood that she went for the first time to the Assembly, "which has done so many things or at least invested with the character of the law all that was really done by the force of circumstances and that of public opinion."

"If I had not been a patriot [*i. e.*, Revolutionist] I should have become one watching its sittings, so evident was the bad faith of the *Noirs* [Royalists]," she wrote Bancal (March 7, 1791). The principal deputies were rapidly and discriminatingly reviewed and labelled, each one with a descriptive adjective. She heard the seductive Lameths, who did not seduce her, though they might deceive the ignorant, who are as susceptible to flattery as are imbecile persons. She was less amused by the wit of Maury, who could speak for two hours without losing a moment or uttering a single truth. Cazalès's eloquence amazed her, and after the death of Mirabeau she considered him the first French orator. Mirabeau was the only man of the Revolution whose genius could *impulser* an Assembly. He was great by his gifts, small by his vices, but always superior to the herd, and always its master when he deigned to take the trouble to command it. He died just in time for his fame and for liberty. "Events have brought me to regret him more. A man of his strength was needed as a counterpoise to the action of a crowd of curs."

Manon noticed that the popular "notions" of Barnave contained more adjectives than reasons, more pathos than grandeur, and found their author a small person "cold as a squash fricasseed in snow."

On the whole, Manon's judgment was severe; the Assembly

was making patchwork, no reform was carried through, questions of finance, the most important of all, were adjourned, a thousand matters were brought to the Assembly that should have been settled elsewhere, which hindered its proceedings and delayed more important decisions.

All of which was true, but were not Manon and her party somewhat to blame for this stay of proceedings? When she recommended good patriots to watch the Assembly, the clubs to admonish it, thinking people to write and furnish it with questions, considerations, suggestions for decrees and projects of reform, she was clogging the wheels of its advance and effectually preventing continuity of action. The Assembly was then the authority in France, and it was at once legislative and executive, and people brought their troubles and perplexities to it as they once carried them to Saint Louis sitting beneath his tree. The Manège where the Assembly met was the theatre of many scenes, puerile, touching, and sometimes noble, living testimonies of the faith of the people in the advent of justice.

Manon had no illusions about the Revolutionists, the Left of the Assembly. "I saw with vexation on the side of the *'Noirs'* the kind of superiority conferred in such assemblies by the habit of appearing in public—by [illegible] of language and by distinction of manners. But [illegible] reason, the courage of uprightness, the enlightenment of philosophy, the learning of the study and the ease [illegible]red at the Bar should insure the triumph of the patriots. The Left were all of them *pure and "could they remain [illegible]f..."* Madame Roland's keen insight detected at once the fatal weakness of the new party—its lack of unity.

She soon, however, had no reason to complain of the want of noble and facile eloquence and elegance of expression in her own party: the golden periods of Vergniaud, the terse, ardent sentences of Buzot, the trenchant satire of Gensonné, the sparkling sallies of Ducos, of Guadet, made of the Gironde the party of wits and orators.

APPENDIX V

THE GIRONDINS

Liberty was a religion—hence its intolerance, its sectarian hatreds, its cruel bigotry; hence also its devotion, its faith which worked miracles, its irresistible force; hence its hypocrisies, its cant, and its Tartuffes.

But the crimes done in the name of religion we forgive more easily than those committed in the name of liberty. Reason as well as reverence is outraged by these. "Let this be a sign that you love one another" was not more violated by the young church than was the dictum of the Revolution, "One man's liberty ends where another's begins," by the Terrorists.

In the freezing caves of Saint Emilion, in the stifling garret and dark hiding-places, infected prison cells, none of the Girondins ever doubted the righteousness of their cause, the perfection of their ideal. They died in the faith. It was not the Republic that was at fault, it was men who were unworthy of it, incapable of rising to the moral height it demands. The vision of perfect government remained undimmed in the imagination of its devotees; their failure to realize it in no wise impaired their convictions. It was always the perfect commonwealth, and when conquered and disillusioned the sanctuary they sought was a sister republic, that of the United States. It was towards America that the discouraged deputies turned after Wimpfen's defeat, to an America which they had learned to love and perhaps to idealize from Brissot's eulogies and the enthusiasm inspired by the companions of Lafayette.

All of them men of culture, of trained minds, they were fervent disciples of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. They believed in the authority of reason, the return to nature, in human fraternity. Liberty, equality, were not then terms that had been dragged in the mud, mouthed by vulgar demagogues, invoked by envy and license. No crimes had

yet been committed in their names; they were still virgins, kindling a vestal flame in generous hearts.

Liberty, like *patrie*, was a being, a yearning to be incarnated by desire and will. It was a practical reality as well: the protection of the individual, the emancipation of mind and conscience, the abolition of the rules of serfdom on feudal soil. Equality implied the suppression of caste privileges, the uniform levy of taxes, the admission of all classes to all public functions, the parity of all before the law—the Law to which Liberty itself is subject.

In "*l'Amour de la Liberté, c'est-à-dire de la règle suivant la nature des choses humaines*," the Girondins took issue in their faith in a disciplined liberty with the Mountain, who believed theoretically in unrestrained individual liberty or individualism.

It was because the Mountain did believe theoretically only in unlimited liberty and practised obsolete tyranny that it overcame adversaries who acted in good faith and whose general attitude conformed to their principles. The Girondins considered interests of humanity and not the interests of the moment. Their objective attitude—this putting the greater issue above the smaller issue—sent them unarmed to death, but made them live again in the minds of those "who like them would see a Republic founded on justice."

The honor of the Girondins, their rehabilitation, was what preoccupied them. Life they expected to sacrifice; no real Revolutionist rated that highly; but to restore their good name, to justify themselves in the eyes of their constituents, of their countrymen, this they counted a sacred duty, and for this they unfalteringly endured cold and hunger and darkness and fear. The hope of justification kept them alive.

What distinguishes strategically the group of the Girondins from their adversaries was that in them the personal individuality prevalent to-day found larger manifestation than in the Mountain. The Girondins were all too equally matched in ability. They could not act together, because they had pushed individual expansion to the point where it hinders social development. With many personal virtues, the Gironde lacked social virtue. A coalition of many intelli-

gences will never possess the working power of a faction dominated by a single mind. When there are too many superior minds they cease to be superior. The eminence of one will necessarily limit the eminence of his fellow. All possess value, but the value is not mobilized. Spain with her glut of Indian gold was not more impoverished through excess of treasure than was the Gironde with her plethora of golden mouths.

Had the Gironde possessed but one orator instead of many, one writer instead of a legion, a unique genius would have become a mouthpiece for the whole party and would have unified its thought and its suffrages in one eloquent utterance. In such a republic of talent the evenly endowed mass of individuals struggle for personal existence one against another. Vergniaud found as many critics as admirers in his own party. The Mountain, composed largely of men lacking in eloquence and literary culture, found its paucity of genius a source of strength over its brilliant adversary. An aristocracy of intellect that is not an oligarchy exhausts itself in vain emulations.

Madame Roland shared "the crime of the Girondins, which was to have believed that all parts of French territory were equally penetrated by the new spirit" (Quinet). France cannot forgive them for overestimating her. But does any people ever become worthy of liberty until it is acquired? Is it not the exercise of it which renders them worthy of their possession of it?

The optimism of naturally virtuous natures is too often the stumbling-block to the reforms which they would establish. The existence of evil and of evil natures must be fully recognized and taken into account, and the formidable power of ignorance. It is not enough to oppose the true to the false. Visions are deflected and do not recognize the majesty of truth. And a *mental* assent may be given to what is no bridle to desire, no curb to appetite, to what has no appreciable effect on conduct.

Liberty, in its very nature, is bound to be merciful. It cannot employ the resources of tyranny; hence its apparent and often real weakness; it cannot "*contrains-les d'entrer.*"

The Girondin distrust of the Constitutionalists was justified by events. Their belief in the people, in the virtuousness of poverty, in the sanctity of the simple life, their lack of knowledge of the world and somewhat naïve distrust of their social superiors, were natural enough when we consider the humiliations to which they had been exposed. Their mental culture was far superior to their social culture. Enthusiasm, generosity, a lofty ideal, ardent imagination, the artist's nature rather than the politician's inspired them; the France of republican ideals, of the federations, of true fraternity, was the Girondin France. The policy of the Committees of the Commune, of the Mountain, was a return to mediæval and barbaric methods of government. It was not because the Girondins were conservative but because they were true radicals that they opposed the measures of the popular party. The counter-revolution, a term first employed by Buzot, and afterwards by Quinet—the negation of the principles of the Revolution—began after the rise of the Commune and the massacres of September. Danton, Robespierre, the partisans of violence, were reactionaries. The real men of progress were the Girondins. The *theory* of that Republic was supplied by the Gironde. Condorcet formulated the philosophy of the Revolution.

At the present moment it is not difficult to deal impartially with the group of brilliant men which formed the Gironde. They are not as popular now as they were with Sainte Beuve and the republicans of the last century. Their political rivals are again in the ascendant, and the heroes of the Mountain are those of the hour. For there are fashions in writing history as well as in making hats, and each opinion has its day. Neither the author nor the milliner is a freeman. The most original thinker is influenced by the climate of opinion, and the bias not only of the historian but of his public is visible in his work. We are constantly reminded that the history of the Revolution is still the closed lists of literary and political antagonists. No series of events has been viewed more diversely, no period has been subject to greater successive fluctuations, as well as contemporary differences, of opinion. A typical example of this mutability is afforded by the lives of Danton's family.

After his death his second wife returned to her father, resumed her maiden name, and soon afterwards remarried. During the course of a long life she never spoke of her first husband. Danton's two sons were brought up by their mother's family. For many years after they reached manhood they lived alone in their father's house at Arcis-sur-Aube. The blood of September, the blood that had stifled their mother, ran between them and the villagers. "Que mon nom soit flétri!" Danton cried in one of his oratorical flights, forgetful of the innocent he condemned to obloquy and isolation. Their loneliness was deeply felt by the younger of the sons, Georges Danton, who, born during the storms of 1792, was especially nervous and susceptible. The shy, silent men were pitied and perhaps respected by their townsfolk, but their name still struck terror.

In 1848, the year of revolutions, came a change of things, and the people of Arcis, hearing the praises of their illustrious fellow citizen from all quarters, decided to make tardy amends to his sons. It was resolved by the municipal council that the first tree of liberty raised to commemorate the new-born republic should be a poplar from the Dantons' garden. A delegation accompanied by the village band and the usual quantity of unoccupied citizens, who add numbers if not dignity to such manifestations, arrived at the silent house. The Dantons, in answer to their summons, appeared at the door; the municipal council saluted them, the crowd hurrahed, music sounded, all the voices burst into the "Marseillaise," and Georges Danton fell down senseless at their feet; he died two months later. Sympathy and recognition had come too late.

Danton's statue is now the pride of Arcis; for not skies but souls change, and the Dantons' is the story of many families of the Revolution. At first, when the hurricane of the Terror died away, the survivors buried their dead and rebuilt their ruined homes in a stunned silence. Those who had sown the storm and reaped the whirlwind were very quiet. The bravest of their sons had no desire to wake the dead from their bloody sleep. They made themselves small, they changed their names, sometimes their habitat. The armies of the Empire were filled with the children of the Revolution. Those who once had made it glorious or

infamous mutely agreed to ignore the past; they despaired of the Republic. Such memoirs as were written were the apologies or recantations of those who had been fair-weather friends of the Revolution, as they were later partisans of Napoleon, or adherents of the Bourbons. Across the frontier, or in tiny hamlet, or obscure Paris street, the old conventionnels remained dumb and almost forgotten.

This cowed silence was broken by a woman's voice. In her Considérations sur la Révolution, Madame de Stael separated its principles and ideals from the crimes of the Terror, and people began to perceive what had long been obscured by a bloody mist. First to emerge from this sinister cloud were the Girondins, "*ces belles figures humaines*," the heroes of Lamartine's historical romance. The liberal, were he Frenchman or foreigner, could understand the attitude and admire the aim of the Girondin whose desire to save the King, punish the assassins of September, and resist the tyranny of a minority were his undoing, while his passionate loyalty to his ideal republic, and the accusation of federalism did not lessen the sympathies of the American democrat.

With the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 feeling changed more radically. "The Men of '93 were giants," cried Victor Hugo's Marius to his shocked Royalist grandfather, and he was the spokesman of enthusiastic youth. The sanguinary despotism of the Second Empire inflamed this ardor. After its shameful fall, after the invasion of France and the shrinkage of her boundaries, Frenchmen turned from their present humiliation to memories of a *patria* triumphant over a coalition of kings. Out of these memories grew gratitude to "the organizers of victory," Carnot, Cambon, Merlin de Thionville, Jean Bon Saint André, and Danton. Finally Robespierre and Saint Just were rehabilitated, and Socialism welcomed a forerunner in Marat. The workers and administrators, the men of action who had long been confused with the mere brawlers and butchers, have come to their own again, sometimes to more than their due, for the pendulum is swinging very far Terrorward, and there were few better Jacobins in '93 than many French writers are to-day. Danton's statue is a familiar Parisian landmark, Marat's image is soon to be set up, and the envious shade of Robespierre need not despair of future honors. Naturally enough,

there is a reaction in public opinion against this rather undiscriminating glorification of Terrorists. Unfortunately, it is as often *muscadin* as republican, and consequently tainted with snobbishness, but ability and talent and, what is quite as effective, public funds and official patronage are on the side of the Sansculottes. Between the radical and the reactionary the Gironde fares ill; at present the spotlight is on the Mountain; its old rival is in momentary eclipse. The Girondins have had their season; they must wait for another turn of the wheel to come up again into the sunshine of popularity.

But old fashions are always returning, modes of thought as well as the vesture of thought. We shall go back to the bonnets of the thirties and the heroes of Vatel. There are already portents of a revulsion of public opinion. The moral sense and the common sense of the community are alike rebellious against laudations of inhuman theorists and ferocious demagogues. Men grow as tired of hearing Robespierre praised as Barère did of hearing Roland called the Just; perhaps even more so, as paradoxes are more wearisome than platitudes. *En attendant*, the Girondins, I repeat, in spite of such winning and elevated studies of them as Auguste Rey's *Le Naturaliste Bosc*, and Camille Perroud's *Brissot*, are in the shade.

APPENDIX VI

THE METHODS OF THE MOUNTAIN

The Sociétés Populaires were an idea of Lanthenas, who founded thirty of them in Lyons alone. It was M. Roland's idea (and a fatal one for his wife) to create a bureau of special correspondence with these societies, to send them free printed matter to instruct or interest them, and to pay orators to address them. The plan once elaborated, it was necessary to have it accepted by the Assembly and to obtain the funds such a plan required. Roland had refused to sanction it during his first ministry, but after the 10th of August it was adopted. This was in the eyes of the Mountain Madame Roland's crime against the Republic. The methods of the Mountain were different and vastly more effective. To appeal to the minds of a constituency is a slow and uncertain process; to appeal to its appetite is a swift and practical one.

It was a crime for Roland to spend thirty-six thousand francs on a series of brochures, a republican propaganda of political tracts sent into the country, explaining the nature of liberty, the machinery of government, etc. It was meritorious of Danton to spend three hundred thousand for the same avowed purpose.

(See extract from Louvet's letter.)

In order to excuse the crimes of the prominent Terrorists, their patriotism, their austere enthusiasm, the purity and probity of their private life have been extolled. They were Spartan heroes sending, with fortitude recalling that of Brutus, hecatombs of victims to be sacrificed on the altar. They shed innocent blood because they sincerely believed that the safety of the country demanded holocausts. Solemn and devout, they killed and prosecuted with the detachment of a Grand Inquisitor. Their ruthlessness was religious, impersonal, exercised in the service of an idea; though ferocious, they were virtuous, exalted, fanatical, single-minded.

Their disinterestedness was supposed to be proved by their irreproachable conduct in their private relations. *Was* it irreproachable? The giants of '93, looming through a red mist, are formidable, grandiose, like the Molochs of antiquity, rising dimly terrible behind the smoke of streaming altars and blurring clouds of censers. But a closer inspection attenuates this impression. The written records silence the eloquence that has celebrated the disinterestedness of the Revolutionary leaders. How dead falls the thunderbolt of oratory when it strikes a worn bit of paper, a stamped and dated entry in some dusty public record. Saint-Just, Hérault de Séchelles, Jullien de Paris—these colossi are but vulgar politicians, hungering for rule or money, each preoccupied with personal aims, each with his following of needy and complaisant friends. Theirs are the methods of political rings: payment of writers, bullying, bribing, gross flattery of ignorance, exaltation of the average man over the exceptional man, shameless distribution of privileges and places. Here are all the modern tricks, all the open favor shown the café or the brasserie where "pure" patriots congregate.

The men of '93 would have been merely vulgar politicians had not their crimes been so great. A certain kind of baseness seems to be the product of a new-born democracy—*seems* only, for these knights of industry have generally learned their trade under an older régime, like the Abbé d'Espagnac, an old factotum of Calonne or Péreyra, the *soi-disant* tobacconist, who trafficked in suspicious peculations, as well as Proly, who was a spy, the two Jews Frey, whose sister married Chabot, and Dietrichsen, Gusman, and the Baron de Batz. This vermin infested the passages of the Assembly. Thanks to the complicity of the needy deputies and their early knowledge of public measures, which they owed to friends in the Comité du Salut Public, they made fortunes out of a starving France, while Frenchmen, already unwilling victims of arbitrary laws and suffering general poverty, opened the march of the coming Terror by the insouciant destruction of commerce and industry, while the Demos issued a new revocation of the Edict of Nantes and again attacked the skilled artisan and the industrial arts.

The Mountain declared its belief in justice, too, but decided to put off the practice of it until a more opportune time. The

Gironde, on the contrary, believed that if justice and right are indeed sacred things, the very time to put them to the proof is during storm and stress. The one article of faith held in common by the Girondins, whatever their beliefs or unbeliefs in other things celestial, was an impassioned conviction of the existence of a divine justice. Where? In their own hearts and in those of their fellow men? Without them as a reality? Within them as a great desire? Who knew? Who could locate this necessity of the soul? Justice was the new divinity of men, bent on redressing the wrongs of a thousand years; justice—not grace—the appanage of kings, to be dispensed by favor.

APPENDIX VII

THE SALON OF MADAME ROLAND

This was a society of partisans composed of grave folk occupied with serious matters, mostly Girondins. Its tone was thoughtful but not solemn. The lightness of hand which the French display in all social discussion, even of the profoundest subjects, saved it from pedantry, and the presence of women, even such serious-minded women as the *femmes politiques*, imposed on it a certain good humor. The dinners followed by discussions (during which the project for the Sociétés Populaires of Lanthenas was perfected) took place on Mondays and Thursdays. Soon, however, the popular government found these simple dinners, these reunions of friends and colleagues, a menace to the liberties of the people. A supper was necessarily, according to Père Duchesne, a meeting of conspirators. The guest of yesterday denounces his hostess. Danton, who a few months before "*venait me demander la soupe presque tous les jours*," sends Madame Roland to the scaffold. Camille Desmoulins thinks the Rolands' receptions "suspect" only a short time before his own wife's were denounced by the spies of Robespierre, whom he had invited to them. Madame Roland knew all her enemies well; they had sat at her table, they had listened with deep attention to her words, in order to use them next day in the . . .

By a wide distribution of literature, she and her party endeavored to educate the nation in liberty and the sane exercise of its newly acquired rights. Speakers and lecturers were sent out from headquarters at the ministry all over France. Dinners and social reunions kept the chiefs of the party together, where woman's tact and the amenities of the drawing-room healed the slight breaches and diminished friction, and where measures were discussed and policies adopted.

She was a political woman who owed her position and influence to her own industry and talent, almost the unique "self-made" woman in the political world. To the duties of a mother and housewife, at a time when housekeeping included all the domestic industries, she added the achievements of an honorable and able man—the study of economic conditions, close personal contact with the most oppressed class of the people, and the practical experience of the farmer. Her idealism was qualified by her acceptance of the reality of life, and her humdrum tasks were sweetened by her way of performing them. Her methods were always direct. Small wonder that she embodied for the brilliant men of her following the republican idea in its purest form; amid tergiversations she never wavered; in a world where people clamored for their rights, and especially for the right to happiness, she sacrificed hers and that of the man she loved to duty. She made no specious distinctions between public and private morality, and would have the republic served with clean hands. The flights of her enthusiasm were ballasted with good sense. . . .

All the legitimate means of shaping public opinion, of securing the triumph of ideas, were, if not discovered, developed and amplified by Madame Roland. It was not only for her political opinions that she was put to death, it was for the propaganda of her opinions. Women had often possessed political power, they had won it by base means, they had inherited it or usurped it. Madame Roland earned it. It is this honesty of means and nobility of purpose that make the study of her methods worth while; that invest it with permanent value for the busy modern student of politics or history. Madame Roland points a modern moral; she is of our own time; her spirit lives to-day. Her contemporaries, the queens and courtesans who spent the money and shed the blood of the people, the Pompadours and Du Barrys, the Antoinettes and Theresias, seem very far away. They belong to the old order, their language is not ours, their theories of life are outworn. The daughter of the people has a message for us, the *citoyenne* of the first French Republic is one with us. Her credo, her illusions, her errors are ours.

There is as much, perhaps more, to be learned from her mistakes as from her successes. Her partisanship, her scorn of compromises, her intense party feeling, her momentary and bitterly repented sanction of violence color but do not darken her radiant memory.

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